

GURU GOBIND SINGH RE-TOLD

NARAIN SINGH

**26-Krishna Square, Shiwala Road,
AMRITSAR**

Published by :

BHAGAT PURAN SINGH

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CONTENTS

Introduction	5
CHAPTER I	
The Image of the Guru	19
CHAPTER II	
Sword unsheathed as a Painful necessity	57
CHAPTER III	
Compulsions of War	90
CHAPTER IV	
The advent and early age	108
CHAPTER V	
The martyrdom way to save Dharma	116
CHAPTER VI	
Battles of Bhangani, Nadaun and Anandpur	136
CHAPTER VII	
The Guru's literary and cultural Interests	158
CHAPTER VIII	
The Guru's marriages	171
CHAPTER IX	
The Call	187
CHAPTER X	
Durga Worship with a difference	219
CHAPTER XI	
The Khalsa Brotherhood	244

CHAPTER XII	
The Khalsa fights out for Dharma	282
CHAPTER XIII	
The Khalsa Wins in defeats and sufferings	295
CHAPTER XIV	
The Guru's departure to Deccan	323
CHAPTER XV	
The earthly close	340
CHAPTER XVI	
Guru Gobind Singh, viewed as Guru Nanak's re-incarnation, in spirit	353

Prabjot Press, AMRITSAR

Introduction

‘ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਅਗਮ ਹੈ ਕਿਆ ਕਥੈ ਕਥਨਹਾਰੁ ।’

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

‘Ineffable is the Guru’s glory ; what can a sayer say ?’

Guru Arjan in Sri Rag

This book was published for the first time, some sixteen years ago, on the eve of the Tricentenary of Guru Gobind Singh. But since the great Guru has admirers & devotees all over the world, it is hoped that the present edition, though belated, will also receive an enthusiastic, respectful & loving welcome, as before, particularly in the land of his birth, even if we claim nothing new for it. The debt India owes to him is hard to estimate and harder still to forget. The survival of the country, with its glorious hoary past, its beautiful culture and civilization, and, above all, the Hindu thought, embodying some highly inspiring ideas, such as the oneness of the Atma & the Paramatma, is a perpetual memorial to a life of dedication and service that was his. The country, as we shall have occasion to examine, was overtaken by history’s greatest cataclysm. As a matter of fact, the history of this period can be considered as essentially the history of the Sikh Gurus and they wrote it with the blood of the Sikh martyrs. And Guru Gobind Singh was called upon to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, unsurpassed in the dark lamentable

catalogue of human crimes. Like a true Karma Yogi, he responded admirably to the call for a selfless and dedicated life. His work, his suffering and his achievements are really without a parallel. We shall see that he lived truly and died also truly.

His life is, thus, a matter of historic and national significance, though he was essentially a universal man. The times and conditions, in which he worked, have now changed but the basic problems he sought to tackle still persist, though in other and new forms. True, we are having now a secular form of democracy, but since we have lost the true values of life, we are groping in the dark with nothing to sustain ourselves. It is in this context that the Guru's life can provide clues to the solution of all problems the country may be called upon to face, because the great qualities he possessed and the worthy ideals he cherished, will ever be with us for our guidance, the freshness of their appeal never dimming with time. What is needed, however, is not paying merely lip homage or indulging in empty superficial talk but following in his footsteps and leading a good life a life of dedication, nobility, service and heroism, which are the truest assets that can serve us with undiminished loyalty, when all else betrays us or seems dark for us. Men with modest means can be most happy if they shed off this lust for power, since power & sense of proportion seldom go together. And this would require recalling what the Guru really stood for and what message his inspiring personality had for mankind of the present as also of the coming generations, so that in the tasks before it, it did not falter or go wrong. This book is expected to be helpful from that point of view also. Its aim has been to present a true picture of the Guru, carefully avoiding pitfalls of excessive

exaggerations or thoughtless under-statements, since both are likely to disfigure a seer's personality equally. It must be admitted, however, that it is most difficult, if not impossible, for a writer to be quite impartial, when he happens to be a devotee himself. Yet, the guiding star must not be lost sight of, particularly when it is known that there is already a deplorable lack of authentic record about the Guru's life.

Paradoxical as it may seem, it is more difficult to establish authenticity of the life events of Guru Gobind Singh than of Guru Nanak, even though the former appeared two hundred years after the latter. The paradox is, in some measure, easy to explain. Whereas events in the life of Guru Nanak can always be examined critically on the touchstone of his Word, the same is, strictly speaking, not possible in the case of Guru Gobind Singh, as his views and teachings have not come to us in their perfect purity, in the same way as those of Guru Nanak & the other Gurus. His own works as also those of writers in his service, had to be, then, in the manuscript form, as the printing of the present age had not yet come into being. Most of these works had gone into the bottom of the river Sirsa after Anandpur was vacated, during the terrible days of extreme stress and strain, for the Sikh people. A few of them, mostly translations from Sanskrit books, were saved and these and some others were, later on, collected by Bhai Mani Singh to form what is familiarly known as Dasam Granth. The situation, as it obtains today is that no single book can be accepted as a reliable history of the Guru nor any as a complete and perfectly authentic record of his teachings. A few of the compositions like the Akal Ustat, the Jap, the Shabad Hazare, and the Swayyas etc.

are undoubtedly his works, as these have come to be used since the Guru's time in the Daily Sikh prayer and the ritual. The Dasam Granth, created by Bhai Mani Singh, as stated above, will be dealt with presently.

For the purposes of his biography, we have the Bachitar Natak (Wonderful drama) written by the Guru himself. But the Natak deals with a very few events of his life. We shall examine this Natak more closely in some other chapter. Saina Pat and Bhai Nand Lal, the two court poets of the Guru, have written 'Gur Sobha' and 'Zindginama', respectively but these are not exhaustive enough, and do not deal with all important events and noteworthy aspects of the Guru's life. Nand Lal's accounts are intended more to sing the Guru's praises than to present a biography. 'Gur Sobha' is most scrappy and its accounts are, as admitted by the author himself, partly hearsay and partly logicised and these were written too long after the Guru's death. Yet, it is a valuable book, in some respects, even though it has depended too much on hearsay, as stated above.

Santokh Singh's 'Suraj Parkash', Sukha Singh's 'Gurbilas', Gian Singh's 'Panth Parkash', Mani Singh's 'Gian Ratanavali', and 'Sau Sakhi' (supposed to be the conversation between Sahib Singh and Gurbux Singh, on the sayings and doings of the Guru), are some of the books written by the Guru's admirers and devotees. Some of these, on account of misconceived notions and extravagant but unintelligent partiality, have failed to be objective in their assessment and have at places unwittingly given currency to views they held themselves but were clearly contrary to facts and contrary to the teachings of the Guru. Others, among them have not been able to correctly interpret some of the events associated

with the Guru's life.

There are Hindu, Muslim and European writers also, but their accounts are highly coloured and distorted. Some are not well informed, others are clearly prejudiced, and still others, hostile and anti-Sikh. Muslim writers from whom the European writers have taken their cue are the worst offenders in this regard, so much so, that they are unable to conceal their bigotry and prejudices and do not hesitate to employ unbecoming language to malign the subject of their study. They suppress and conceal events that redound to the Guru's glory and give prominence to fables which are mere figments of imagination. They twist and distort facts of history to give currency to views and notions, completely unrelated to facts. We have pointed out some of these twists and distortions in the body of the book, at their proper places. Here we give just two instances out of many, from Mohd. Latif's 'History of the Panjab', to show how political & communal considerations disfigure history, so grievously.

1. First, the writer propounds the thesis that 'Guru Gobind Singh greatly modified the tenets of his predecessors and infused into his followers, ideas of war and conquest, turning them from peaceful subjects into a contentious tribe. This can be brushed aside as nonsense on the basis of the writings of the Gurus & their contemporaries. Then he goes on to build the same thesis on premises wholly non-existent. He writes : 'It was the intention of Gobind to modify the code of Nanak, as laid down in the Adi-Granth and with that object he sent his men to the Sodhis of Kartarpur, to bring to him the Adi-Granth. But as the Sodhis were averse to the religious beliefs of Gobind, they declined to lend the book,

making the touching remark that if the Guru, who styled himself as the 'true king', had the genius of a lawgiver, he would do well to make a Granth of his own. This incensed the Guru and he resolved upon making his own code. He occupied himself in composing the new Granth in his retreat at Damdama'.

The writer wants people to believe that the Guru had replaced the Adi-Granth by the Dasam Granth, a totally absurd conclusion.

2. Regarding Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, Latif cleverly gives currency to a fable which, for honest men, is a fantastic nonsense. This is what he writes : "The emperor asked Guru Tegh Bahadur to show a miracle or embrace Islam. The Guru being unable to satisfy his majesty, one way or the other, was by the king's order, thrown into prison, and, on his persistently refusing to become a convert, was subjected to bodily tortures. Tired of his life, he expressed his readiness to show a miracle in proof of the alleged divinity of his mission. He wrote on a piece of paper which he said was charmed and then, having tied it round his neck declared that the sword would fall harmless on it by the effect of the charm which was written upon it. The executioner was summoned to test the miraculous charm. The blow was given and the head of the Guru rolled on the floor to the amazement of the court. The paper was then read out and it contained these words : 'Sir dia, Sar na dia'. The courtiers were struck with horror and surprise. The emperor was himself disgusted and displeased and ordered the crowd to 'disperse'".

The writer is conscious that the story he has told is too unreal and absurd to be swallowed and so adds a line, so as to make himself look dispassionate, in the eyes of

the world. This is what he is compelled to add : 'It is more probable that the Guru was executed as a rebel against the government'.

How can one expect a scientific objectivity, a strict regard for truth and a dispassionate deal, from such writers ? What they say is an insult to history. They are fanatics at heart, blinded by communal frenzy and pose as historians. They believe in throwing mud at the opponent in the vain hope that some of it will stick. Many of them do not hesitate to concoct and spread blatant lies. The Guru's struggle against the Muslim rulers coloured their views and they ascribed to the Guru policies and programmes that find no support in his writings nor in the principles of his life. The Guru's biography is, thus, spoiled both by his admirers and detractors.

Malcolm, in his 'Sketch of the Sikhs', endorses the above conclusion, of course, in his own way. Referring in a general manner to reformers having religious pretensions, he says : 'The accounts of their lives are generally recorded either by devoted disciples and warm adherents or by violent enemies and bigoted persecutors. The former, from enthusiastic admiration, decorate them with every quality and accomplishment that can adorn them ; the latter misrepresent their character and detract from all their merit and pretensions. This general remark, I have found to apply with peculiar force to the varying accounts of Sikh and Muslim writers of Nanak and his successors.'

But apart from prejudice, bias or hostility, there is another important factor which is not given due weight. History describes events but deals with men only as they appear and not as they actually were. It is not possible for a mere historian, however honest, to write the bio-

graphy of a seer, unless he is fully conversant with the views and teachings of the seer and can relate these views to him. Mere statement of historical facts will not explain these facts unless they are suitably interpreted in terms of the seer's philosophy of life. Guru Arjan says :

‘ਸਾਧ ਕੀ ਮਹਮਾ ਬਰਨੇ ਕਉਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ’ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

‘Who can describe the glory of a saint ?’

Guru Arjan in Gauri.

Again,

‘ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕੀ ਮਿਤਿ ਕਉਨੁ ਬਖਾਨੈ ॥

ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜਾਣੈ ।’ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

‘Who can measure the greatness of a divine seer ?
It is only a seer that knoweth the state of a seer’.

Guru Arjan in Gauri,

We may now come back to the ‘Dasam Granth’ which, to many, has become a misnomer. It was compiled by Bhai Mani Singh, long after the Guru's death. It seems to many that the compositions of the Guru had perhaps got mingled with those of poets and writers, who worked with him. Yet it has been difficult for any one to say for certain as to which of these writings did not represent the Guru's own views. Bhai Mani Singh's aim might have been to save whatever came into his hands from being lost and so he hurriedly collected them all in one volume, to be sifted later on when better times came. But he was martyred soon after and the ‘Dasam Granth’, created by him, became a baffling problem for the Sikhs of the past as also of the present age.

It is a fact of history that after the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh, the volume was taken to Damdama Sahib for close examination and review, by learned scholars who happened to be staying there, at the time. Also the place was considered to be comparatively quieter

and safer for such an examination during those difficult times. The several reviewers gathered there, differed widely. They could not all agree to the position that the whole of the volume represented the Guru's views. Also it was found that it did not deal merely with spiritual or religious matters and therefore could be considered as a literary work, dealing with all aspects of human life. Now how the matter was ultimately disposed of, provides interesting reading. Several reviewers were of the opinion that the volume in question should be broken up into two parts. As the issue was being discussed, Bhai Mehtab Singh of Miran Kot arrived. He had vowed to kill Massa Ranghar, the man, then in possession of the Golden Temple, and who was known to be defiling its sanctity, by permitting dancing girls to stage dances in the holy precincts. Mehtab Singh was proceeding straight away to Amritsar, for the fulfilment of his vow, when he found the reviewers in a dilemma. He suggested to them, and the suggestion was adopted, rather thoughtlessly, that if he succeeded in his mission, the volume should be allowed to remain as it was, but if he failed, the same might be broken up into two parts. As his mission succeeded, the volume was allowed to remain intact i.e., in its original form and design, as conceived by Bhai Mani Singh. Now clearly, this was not the right way to settle an issue of such high importance. Facts of History could never be ascertained by leaving things to a mere chance, to a sort of mere gamble.

During the Singh Sabha movement, an attempt was made once again to go into the matter. The theologians, deputed for the purpose by the Singh Sabha, came to the conclusion that all the writing in the 'Dasam Granth' was that of the Guru. Yet, despite the finding, scholars,

theologians and historians, both Sikh and non-Sikh, have continued to be divided in their respective views on the subject. They cannot be persuaded to believe that everything the Granth contains, can be the Guru's. The fact of the matter is that it is not all philosophical or devotional: Much of it is mythological. The Hikayats (Persian tales) and the Triya Charitar (wiles of women) are erotic in character and contain passages that are unwelcome to those who look only for something spiritual from the great Guru. This is how Dr. Gokal Chand speaks about the Granth :

‘The collection does not do credit to the Guru's name and much of it, except the Guru's own compositions, might well have been omitted. The book does not command much respect among cultured Sikhs, who look upon most of its contents as spurious’.

Thus, the situation, as it had obtained for a long time, did call for a re-examination, by a properly constituted committee, representing all shades of opinion and a decision taken after thorough scrutiny and sifting. If there was really a case in support of the view that much of the writing in the volume were from the pen of writers of the Guru's Court, the same should be carefully examined and separated. In any case, it seems most desirable that the scriptural part should be separated from the mythological, the historical, the literary and, above all, the erotic parts, even though these might have their own value. The Sikh people had really wanted a clear-cut lead from the Panth in this direction and the Panth was fully qualified also to give the lead. After the creation of the Khalsa, the Guru had declared that the Panth was to be the Guru, in future. It meant that the Panth would take the place of the person of the Guru

and would work in the Guru's name and on his behalf, under the guidance of the Word. It was thus fully qualified to deal with matters like the above and its decisions should be supposed to have the Guru's sanction. Yet, it is a great pity that this matter of so much importance to the community had not received any attention of the Sikh Panth. Was it expected that some one else would do things what the community had a duty to do itself? If the Sikh people had grown mature, they should have realised their own responsibility, in respect of an important matter like this. In our humble opinion the volume should not have been allowed to remain in its present form. In this connection, we suggest that a book named 'Dasam Granth Nirnain', as published by Gyani Harbans Singh, should be examined by the Panth. It is very well written & will, in our opinion, solve the above problem. Now to come back.

From the above picture, the reader will appreciate how difficult it is to produce what may be called a perfectly correct life-history of the Guru. All that we have at present is badly mutilated and is full of incongruities, distortions and misrepresentations. Commentators and writers have interpreted events variously according to their own predilections and have, in consequence, produced more confusion. It is true, objectivity is a relative term and a writer can not help reflecting his own likes and dislikes in his writings. But there are certain limits which he should not have allowed himself to overstep. Yet this is exactly what had happened in dealing with the Guru's history.

What is, then, to be done, in this context? The best thing seems to be that wherever there are conflicting versions about an event or an aspect of the Guru's

life, the same should be sifted on the basis of his views and teachings that have come to be accepted as his own, on account of their clear conformity with the Word of his predecessors. The fact that Sikh Gurus were one in spirit could be true only in the sense that the same God-inspired Word was the Guru that had guided all of them. The Guru's life history should, therefore, reflect quite faithfully his own philosophy which, in turn, could not be different from the philosophy of the Holy Adi-Granth. If a seeming departure from that philosophy were found in it, the same should be properly explained and interpreted, in the right perspective. When once it is agreed that a man of the calibre of Guru Gobind Singh must interpret his religion in his own life, then that life should appear as a translation in action of what he taught. This means clearly that he could be discovered in his life as truly as in his Word, or in Guru Nanak's Word. We have, in this book, made an humble attempt to restate (re-interpret) the Guru on this basis. The reader will, however, find quotations, to substantiate or to emphasise a point of view, here or there, mainly from the Guru's own compositions.

The chapters have been suitably ordered. Each chapter begins with a short pithy line chosen from the scriptures to indicate the gist of the chapter or its central theme. The Guru's life history actually begins with Chapter IV, the first three serving as the necessary background for facilitating right comprehension. The first chapter gives the image of the Guru in a general manner. The second explains how a man of peace as the Guru essentially was, the man who also possessed a cosmopolitan outlook and an intensely spiritual background, was compelled to organise, first a national revolt

and then, as a painful necessity, convert the same into a movement of violent resistance against a thoroughly barbarous regime. The third chapter points out the inescapable compulsions that a violent struggle imposes. In dealing with other chapters we have taken care that the outstanding events in the Guru's life and the important issues that emerge from them, are elaborated extensively, and are supported by Sakhis and copious quotations. The aim throughout has been to discover the man and learn from him the great lessons his life provides to mankind. On this account, the Sakhis have, sometimes, appeared at places not strictly in accord with the order of chronology. But that is a small matter, comparatively speaking. The chapters dealing with the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the coming of the Call, the so-called Durga Worship, the creation of the Khalsa Brotherhood, the Guru's departure to Deccan and his earthly end there, have been dealt with rather exhaustively. The accounts of the battles are brief, their cumbersome details having been generally avoided, as they are evidently not of much practical value, in the present context. The last chapter is exclusively devoted to the Guru's philosophy of life. It is intended to dispel the doubt in some minds that his philosophy was, perhaps, different from that of his predecessors and to bring to them the realisation that it was really Guru Nanak that was reincarnated in him to propagate his own philosophy.

The book is heavily documented but most of the quotations are, as stated above, from the teachings of the Guru himself. We have tried all along to enter into the Guru's mind with a view to understand him as correctly as is possible, under the present circumstances.

Let the reader judge for himself how far we have succeeded in that effort. One thing, however, is clear. He will find the Guru of this book very much different from the same Guru of the so-called historians.

Narain Singh,
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Amritsar.

CHAPTER I

The image of the Guru

(What he was and what he was not)

“ਵਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਓ ਪੁਰਖ ਭਗਵੰਤ ਰੂਪ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸੂਰਾ” ॥

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ (ਦੂਜਾ) ॥

“Guru Gobind Singh, moulded in the image of God, appeared in the world, as a warrior.”

Var Bhai Gurdas (the second)

History is sometimes interpreted as the story of the achievements of brave men who, by the dynamic qualities of courage, tenacity, drive and assertiveness, were able to achieve great results. Yet, many brave men have come and gone-men who had, in their life time, displayed great acts of heroism and bravery and had won thereby people's unbounded admiration, but were soon forgotten after they left the scene of their activities. This is because they had worked in ego i.e, for self-aggrandisement. It is not difficult for clever men to manipulate things so as to command respect and allegiance of the people. Many have achieved success in life by bringing about unity in the ranks of their followers, purely under false pretexts or through comouflaging motives. It should also be remembered that social and political achievements of

men are the result of several factors and therefore any attempt to single out one factor alone as the sole determinant for the results achieved, is bound to lead to oversimplification in the interpretation. A true leader, however, comes not to cater to the whims and fancies of society but to fulfil a mission. He can never be made to order. He possesses such positive qualities and essential attributes of a leader as enable him to go deep to the malady from which people suffer and then provide a cure. It is, thus, quite wrong to measure the stature of Guru Gobind Singh by applying the yardstick of merely political and military achievements. To applaud him merely for such achievements may be all right in a limited sense but it is no great service to him, for, it will give but a very inadequate image of him. His real greatness, like that of his predecessors, lies in his spirituality, from which flowed his zest for all the things he did. He was able to provide leadership, perfect in every way, and to gather round him followers at once brave, heroic and self-sacrificing, even beyond human capacity, because he infused in them the inner spiritual awakening. Thus, he was a great leader not merely because he was brave, nor because he had a great community behind him but because he had produced a revolution of a spiritual kind in the hearts of his men. It is true, no movement can succeed without courage sacrifice and dynamism. These are the minimum qualities necessary in all walks of life, otherwise progress on almost all fronts is bound to be held up. But when courage, dynamism and sacrifice are born out of inner spiritual strength, they cannot but produce results which were originally planned and aimed at. Sewaji, the Guru's contemporary, was a brave man. He, too, had dispelled fear from the people's mind and had

made them brave, but he had political ambitions and wanted power for himself. He did not realise that true service could be rendered only by those who built power not for themselves but for the people and worked for their social, economic, moral and political emancipation. This is what Guru Gobind Singh had himself said about mere brave men :--

“ਜੀਤ ਫਿਰੇ ਸਭ ਦੇਸ ਦਿਸਾਨ ਕੋ ਬਾਜਤ ਢੋਲ ਮ੍ਰਿਦੰਗ ਨਗਾਰੇ ॥

ਗੁੰਜਤ ਗੂੜ ਗਜਾਨ ਕੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਹੰਸਤ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਰਾਜ ਹਜਾਰੇ ॥

ਭੂਤ ਭਵਿਖ ਭਵਾਨ ਕੇ ਭੂਪਤ ਕੌਣ ਗਣੈ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤ ਬਿਚਾਰੇ ॥

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਭਜੇ ਬਿਨ ਅੰਤ ਕੋ ਅੰਤ ਕੇ ਧਾਮ ਸਿਧਾਰੇ” ॥

ਸੁਧਾ ਸਵੈਯੇ, ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

“Many brave warriors have conquered countries and have gone about beating drums of victory. They possessed many sturdy elephants to trumpet aloud their victories and had also thousands of horses of royal breed that neighed for them (to signify their glorious achievements). There have been in all ages warrior kings of heroic stature and, so numerous, that they cannot be even counted. Yet, without enshrining the Name of God in their hearts they departed to their final Home (without achieving the thing that really mattered i.e. God-realisation).

Guru Gobind Singh collected people round him because he was himself the embodiment of the highest virtues-virtues of truth, love, goodness and selflessness-and, on this basis, was ever prepared to make any sacrifice for a cause. He knew quite well that no people could be saved from total annihilation if they had lost their souls, their character. Thus, the first necessary thing to be done was to give them back their souls. Though he was called upon to work in the field of active

resistance, his own instincts were those of a devotee, a Bhagata. He loved solitude, he loved meditations, so as to first achieve and then maintain spiritual power. He was a poet certainly, but his poetic perceptions were also of a divine kind. He was, in reality, a great mystic and loved a quiet communion with the Creator. In fact, it was this communion that had produced the Call and had strengthened him to pursue the life of action. The Providence had willed it that the poet, the mystic, the philosopher, the sage and the seer should all combine in him to produce a practical man, a destroyer of evil. So, in this role too, his eyes remained filled with the loved mankind and emitted the light of God. Verily, Guru Nanak had come again, though in a different role, as demanded by the circumstances of the times. Guru Gobind Singh should, therefore, never be considered as a mere reformer or a mere fighter, yoked to the service of his country. Intrinsically he had in him the vision of a seer. The urge to serve, as stated above, had flowed out of his Bhakti, his love of God. Around him was ever the atmosphere of God's Light, that showed him the way and pinned him down as a servant of God, a servant of His Humanity. Therefore, he grew up in a natural way, into a man of spiritual magnetism, into an electrifying personality. The Call had pointed to him the way to attain & retain communion with Him through the service of the common man, the down-trodden and the lost. That, really, was the background of so much emphasis in his Bani on the value of service (sewa). Religion had become for him the living experience of God, through the service of His Humanity. His God was to be found in the cottages of the weak and the helpless. That is how he lived so

beautiful a life, the one in which the essence of religious life was truly interpreted. Left to himself, he ever longed the life of the spirit, a life of holiness, a life of union with the Lord. But, he had no choice. He tells us of having been charged with a mission and so his life had to change its course to dedicate itself to that mission. He affirms in Bachitar Natak that he loved to remain ever in samadhi, thus :

“ਚਿਤ ਨ ਭਇਉ ਹਮਰੋ ਆਵਨ ਤੇ ॥ ਚੁਭੀ ਰਹੀ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਚਰਨਨ ਮਹਿ” ॥
 ‘I liked not to come out of my samadhi, as my mind had firmly clasped the Master’s Feet.’

For him, the spirit was the essence of the Supreme Reality. It was the same one Life Principle that had pulsed every being and therefore service should become life’s passion. This made him a man of cosmic consciousness. And when he opted for a life of service, a life of action, he acted spiritually, in harmony with the Divine Will. If he went to the field of battle, it was with God in his mouth. He was thus a practical mystic, whose religion was reflected in his daily life, whatever the role in which he worked. He speaks in the epilogue to Krishan-Avtar, thus :—

“ਧੰਨ ਜਯੋ ਤਿਹ ਕੋ ਜਗ ਮੈਂ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿਤ ਮੈਂ ਜੁਧ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ॥
 ਦੇਹ ਅਨਿਤ ਨ ਨਿਤ ਰਹੈ ਯਸ ਨਾਵ ਚੜੈ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰ ਤਾਰੈ ॥
 ਧੀਰਜ ਧਾਮ ਬਨਾਯ ਇਹੈ ਤਨ ਬੁਧਿ ਸੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਜਿਉ ਉਜਿਆਰੈ ॥
 ਗਯਾਨਹਿ ਕੀ ਬਢਨੀ ਮਨ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ ਕਾਤਰਤਾ ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੈ” ॥

“Blessed, in this world, is he who hath God on his lips, even when he meditateth struggle (against evil) in his mind. As he knoweth that flesh is mortal and lasteth not long, he embarketh in the ship of true glorification and crosseth the ocean of life. His body is made the

abode of both patience and resignation and he lighteth his mind with the lamps of Divine knowledge. Taking the broom of Divine Wisdom in his mind's hands, he sweepeth away the filth of falsehood and cowardice'.

It is due to this outlook that even in highly critical war conditions, the daily congregational worships were never allowed to be sacrificed. After Anandpur was vacated and the Guru was marching with his men to save life, the ambrosial hours of the morning reminded him & his fleeing army of the time for prayer, when they were ordered to stop to meet in a congregation for offering prayers. The spiritual needs of the soul could not be sacrificed whatever the circumstances of life; for, it was always the spiritual food that sustained men, specially, in hard times.

As his whole life was dedicated to Him, he was detached completely from desire, from the tiny ego, from the lower self. This made him humble to the extreme. How frequently he employed the terms worm (ਕੀਟ), slave (ਦਾਸ) and servant (ਸੇਵਕ) while speaking of himself ! When his battles were won it was all due to God's blessings. When he was saved from a dangerous situation, it was God's Mercy, His Grace, that had brought it about and not for anything he had done :

“ਭਈ ਜੀਤ ਮੇਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਾਲ ਤੇਰੀ ॥” ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

“The victory I win, hath come to me through Thy Grace O Lord of Death !”

‘Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak’

Here is another great song, in Bachittar Natak again on his feelings of humility :—

‘ਮੇਰ ਕਰੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਣ ਤੇ ਮੁਹਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਗਰੀਬ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਨ ਦੂਸਰ ਤੇਸੋ ॥

ਭੂਲ ਛਿਮੋ ਹਮਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਆਪ, ਨ ਭੂਲਣਹਾਰ ਕਹੂੰ ਕੋਊ ਮੋਧੋ ॥
 ਸੇਵ ਕਰੀ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਦੇਖਿਅਤ ਦਰਬ ਭਰੋਸੋ ॥
 ਯਾ ਕਾਲ ਮਹਿ ਸਭ ਕਾਲ, ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਕੇ ਭਾਰੀ ਭੁਜਾਨ ਕੋ ਭਾਰੀ ਭਰੋਸੋ ॥

‘Thou hast turned many an insignificant man like me from mere blades of grass into a mountain. There is no other cherisher of the poor except Thee. O my Lord, forgive me my errors, there is none who hath erred as I have. They who are in thy Service have their houses (hearts) filled with wealth (spiritual wealth). In this Kal Age and in all Ages, great is the strength in the confidence of the Powerful Arm of the Sword (the term Sword is representing God here).’

All his actions, therefore, were for him, the worship of God. These actions were impersonal, non-egoistic and without the least desire for personal gain or honour. In fact, he believed that every act of service was an offering to Him. So, he desired to efface himself completely. When he was departing for his Eternal Home, he forbade his followers to build a shrine, as a memorial, to honour him. He did not want even his name to remain. Also the worship of a name or a form was to him another form of idol worship and he was an idol breaker. It was thus natural for him to desire that his people should imbibe his spirit and not become blind worshippers of his name, which of course, he had already written in sacrifice, unparalleled in the history of man. He sacrificed his father, at the tender age of nine years. In fact, it was he who had made it easy for the father to take a decision for making the supreme sacrifice, by pointing it out to him that if by his sacrifice, the suffering humanity could be saved, the same ought to be made. He sent his two elder sons to get killed

before his eyes in the siege of Chamkaur. The other two sons of seven and nine years were butchered alive without disturbing his mind's composure. Most of his trusted Sikhs, who were dearer to him than life itself, met martyrs' death by his side. He lost all else he had and yet remained ever the same. For him, it was a privilege to be called upon to suffer. He was never plunged into despair, gloom or dejection in the face of severest trials and sufferings. Many times he won in the field of battle but at other times he lost too and then fought again. Like a true Karma-Yogi he was not concerned with victory or defeat, with honour or dishonour, with pleasure or pain, with joy or sorrow. He said, whoever wanted fruits of service, must be full of lust, anger and hate. But if service were dedicated and the mind pure and unselfish, the things of lust and hate would do no harm, as they did in the case of lesser men. In this dedication of the highest order was hidden, he thought, the meaning of life. God accepted the Yajna (sacrifice) of suffering, agony and tears. Thus, sacrificial love had got incarnated in him and he could give away his all with the greatest pleasure. In this love, flowed the same Spirit that permeated the whole universe. He saw the One in all classes, races, countries, religions and sects.

A kalal (wine distiller) came to the Guru for his darshan but conscious that he was considered by others as of low caste, he stood at a distance, lest his approach should defile or be treated as a sacrilege. The Guru was deeply touched. He cheered him up by telling him that he was the jewel of the Guru (Guru ka lal) and not a kalal and he should consider himself as such. It was his dream, in fact, to build a new race of humanity, nourished by love, in which all castes would merge into one brother-

hood and become a mighty union of love, service and sacrifice.

He was deeply spiritual. His God was Truth and hence he practised truth in word, thought and deed. He knew that one could fulfil oneself and live fruitfully in Truth alone. Wealth, beauty, name and fame were all hollow and fleeting things. But the path of Truth is never strewn with flowers and must inevitably result in sufferings and sacrifice. This, in reality, is the basic fact of human life. Those who forget or ignore this basic fact cannot make much headway, even when engaged in service, because their emphasis is always more on rights than on duty, which demands suffering and sacrifice. They are not qualified to lead people to their cherished goal, for, they are not backed by public spirited men and women, ready to forget rights and make sacrifices selflessly. Unless public conscience is aroused to an extent that people are willing to subordinate every self-interest for the common good, nothing of permanent value can be achieved. So, for fruitful service in the public field, there is need as much for bold and imaginative leadership as for the cooperation of selfless, public spirited and politically conscious followers, ready to make every sacrifice at the command of the leader. India wanted a leader at that time who should not only be a man of decision, purpose, drive, spirit, faith, dynamism and far-sightedness but should also be saturated with the love of God and the love of His people so as to electrify the people from out of the stupor into which they had fallen. And it got one in the Guru. He placed before the people worthy ideals and noble impulses and pointed out to them the heights to which they were capable of rising. He stood up

in courage, unsurpassed in human history, to challenge a power considered unconquerable and omnipotent. He created history with a record of suffering for faith and freedom, so much so, that by dint of faith, devotion, sacrifice and implicit obedience, even many of his unlettered followers became warriors and patriots, enriched in spirit. He was a lion himself and when he roared he created in others also the hearts of lions, because he had built up for them earlier a strong moral and spiritual base, to stand upon. He, said :

“ਚਿੜੀਓਂ ਸੇ ਮੈਂ ਬਾਜ਼ ਤੁੜਾਉਂ ॥

ਤਬੀ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾਉਂ” ॥

“I shall cause sparrows to break the hawks. Then alone shall I have the justification for being called Gobind Singh (the Singh (lion) of Gobind (God))”.

And this is how the lion roared :

‘ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਜਗਤ ਕਹਾ ਸੋ ਕਹਿਹੋਂ ॥

ਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਲੋਕ ਤੇ ਮੌਨ ਨ ਰਹਿਹੋਂ’ ॥ ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘I shall speak to the world what He tells me. I cannot be silenced through fear of mere mortals’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

Again,

‘ਕਹਿਯੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸੋ ਭਾਖਹੋਂ ॥ ਕਿਸੁ ਨ ਕਾਨ ਰਾਖਹੋਂ ॥

ਕਿਸੁ ਨ ਭੇਖ ਭੀਜਹੋਂ ॥ ਅਲੇਖ ਬੀਜ ਬੀਜਹੋਂ’ ॥

ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

“I am under obligations to none. I do not bind myself to the advice of any sect. I sow the seed of the Unknowable Lord. Whatsoever the Lord speaketh to me, the same I must say”.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

Fearlessness, as evidenced above, is the keynote of his life, but it comes about when one is delivered from the tyranny of self, through the love of God. Through the same love, he had destroyed the demon of fear, out of his men's hearts. He had actually transformed meek and timid men into fearless, lion-hearted warriors. Yes, Jackals had become lions and sparrows were converted into hawks. He had found people reduced to clay but he converted them into gold. He was himself impervious to set-backs and suffered privations most cheerfully. He could dare all things, risk all things and endure all things. His burning patriotism, his capacity to take risks and his will to resist evil and accept all kinds of sufferings cheerfully, showed to his people the divine stuff he was made of. He had won them over, heart and soul. History bears testimony to the fact that his people were enchanted, as it were, by his superb personality. The following lines, composed by him in Lakhi Jungle, give a picture of their devotion and loyalty, a devotion that has no parallel in the world romance :

‘ਲਖੀ ਜੰਗਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਆਇ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਕੀਤੋਨੇ ॥

ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਸਦ ਮਾਹੀ ਦਾ ਮਝੀਂ ਪਾਣੀ ਘਾਹ ਮੁਤੋ ਨੇ ॥

ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਨ ਰਲੀਆ ਕਾਈ ਇਹ ਕੀ ਸ਼ੌਕ ਪਇਉ ਨੇ ॥

ਗਿਆ ਫਰਾਕ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਮਿਤ ਮਾਹੀ ਤਾਹੀਉਂ ਸੁਕਰ ਕੀਤੋ ਨੇ ॥’

“They heard the call of the beloved and came running to him in the Lakhi jungle. They did not wait for someone's company and came crying to see the Master. Even as the herd of cows and buffaloes run for their master, without food or drink, dropping even the half chewn grass from their mouths, so ran the disciples on hearing his enchanting voice, for the joy of re-union.”

The disciples were indoctrinated and trained in the school of hardships for any kind of privations and trials, at the call of the Master.

A musket was brought by a Sikh, as a present to the Guru. He said, he would try it on a Sikh's forehead. Many Sikhs ran forward to stand for the sacrifice demanded by the Master. Each considered it a privilege to die for the Master. Each vied with the other as to who should make the sacrifice first.

In the midst of agony and persecution, his followers had the strength to suffer for their faith and for the glory of God. Even women and children fought by his side and rejoiced in sufferings. So marvellous was the spirit of sacrifice, infused in them, that they sang joyfully in sufferings, thus :

“ਸਿਰ ਜਾਇ ਤਾ ਜਾਇ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਦਕ ਨ ਜਾਇ” ॥

‘Let my head be cut off, if faith could live’.

And what kind of leader the Guru himself was, who inspired so much courage, faith and sacrifice in his people ? We know, there were times when he was cut off from all his men, yet he was never alone, God was ever with him. On one occasion every body left him. Even Dalla, his trusted Sikh, with whom he had stayed for nine long months, left him to go his way alone. A roaming faqir ironically remarked :

‘ਨ ਡਲਾ ਨ ਮਲਾ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਇਕਲਾ’ ॥

‘There is neither Dalla nor any other ‘hero’ left and the Guru is left alone’.

The Guru laughed at the faqir and said :

‘ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਅਲਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਕਲਾ’ ॥

‘God is ever with the Guru and so he is never alone’.

Therefore with that mental background, nothing could break him and his resolve. Iron had entered into his soul and he broke the might of Mughal imperialism and feudal landlordism and became the liberator of the country. Difficulties only steeled his determination. He was the son of a man who 'gave his head but not his tenacity', as stated in Bachittar Natak, thus :

‘ਸੀਸ ਦੀਆ ਪਰ ਸਿਰਰ ਨ ਦੀਆ’ ॥ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦
‘Guru Tegh Bahadur gave his head but not his resolve’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

The holy father's heart had bled for his down-trodden countrymen and caused him to move from place to place, with a boundless missionary zeal, to serve them. The messiah of love had met people everywhere so as to dry tears from their moist eyes and soothe their afflicted hearts. The spirit of service and the tenacity with which ideals were pursued, by the father, had also entered into the marrow of the son's bones and made him what he was. The great qualities, inherited from the father, were the cause of such glowing examples of self-sacrificing heroism, as were displayed by the son and had made him a sanctuary for all people. He had become a source of inspiration to his followers, for serving divine purposes.

He was really a versatile personality and a many sided genius. He was a man of great initiative, one who could take purposeful decisions and carry them out with indomitable courage. Faith, firmness in direction and confidence in himself, combined with humility and compassion, were all engrained in his being. In truth, he was a superman in thought, spirit, will and action. There was a magic in his personality that made him

most eminently suited, not merely to lead his people but to leave an impress also on the face of India, nay, of the whole world. When all seemed lost, he came to save culture and civilisation. When there was darkness in the world and hope was at the lowest ebb, in the hearts of men, a generous Providence sent him to save civilisation.

First, he created love for his own country. It is a strange phenomenon that his countrymen who had a splendid heritage and who called themselves religious, had their loyalties transferred in other directions. Loyalty to the country and willingness to suffer for it, were not all in their minds. There were, surely, men among them who could give their lives for the vindication of personal honour, for the love of their families and also for their religion. They could undergo even purposeless sufferings for their so-called faith. To appease their gods, they could get themselves sawn into pieces, at the machine (ਕਲਵਤ), stand for months in cold water, cause pain to the body by lying on iron nails, sit in burning fire, offer human lives at the altar of the deities, burn women alive on the pyres of their husbands and undergo hardships in hundred other ways. But they had no patriotic sense, as if patriotism and a true religious spirit, were incompatible terms. The Guru was the first to give a new shape to their thinking. He gave birth, as it were, to nationalism and patriotism and injected manhood into the dead limbs of the people, completely disintegrated and hopelessly weak.

Dr. Gokal Chand writes : "He (the Guru) had realised that the Hindus as a race, were too mild by nature, too contented in their desires, too modest in their aspirations, too averse to physical exertion and

hopelessly scrupulous in giving pain to others, even to their enemies. He also realised that they were a religious people and, terror-stricken and demoralised as they had become, they were still strongly attached to religion, and had shown great readiness to suffer for their faith. There could be only one way of moving such a race. They had religion but no nationality. The only way to make a nation of them was to make nationalism their religion. And Guru Gobind Singh did make nationalism a religion with them and all that goes to form nationality was incorporated as articles of faith, in this new creed".

We may quote Cunningham also, in this connection : "It was reserved for Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform and to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor Gobind to fire the minds of his countrymen with a new nationality and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal to the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes".

Dr. Gokal Chand's analysis of the Hindu mind, as given above, is basically quite correct. The Hindus, as a people, were reduced to a sub-human level, through the debasing tyrannies and in-human treatment meted out to them. They had begun to adopt even the mode of social and domestic life of the rulers. This situation was so keenly resented by the Sikh Gurus that it frequently found forceful expression in their utterances. It showed to them quite clearly, the cringing servility, the hypocrisy and the insincerity of the people at large. Guru Nanak had said :

‘ਖਤਰੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਮਲੇਛ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਗਹੀ ॥

ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਿ ਸਭ ਇਕ ਵਰਨ ਹੋਈ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਰਹੀ’ ॥ ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“The Khatris have forgotten their dharma and have taken to the foreign tongue (accepting the foreign tongue against their own mother tongue was a clear sign of slavish mentality and of political subjugation). Their distinctiveness as a people is gone (through accepting the ways of the foreign rulers). No one has regard for one's own dharma”.

Guru Nanak in Dhanasari

There was no national consciousness left. People abjectly followed the customs and habits of the rulers, in respect of dress, diet, tastes etc. so that there was nothing Indian about them. Not that it was wrong to accept the impact of foreigners with due analysis and a proper selection, ideas being aired, sifted, retained or rejected, in the light of experience and changing conditions. A bold or experimental approach to evolve what was best, wisest and practical, should always be a thing to be welcomed. But it should not be forced from above in a manner that the contact with the nation's own splendid ancient heritage was altogether lost. It should not become a blind aping, resulting in moral, intellectual and spiritual stagnation. The mood of passive acquiescence, had proved a dangerous thing, indeed. People got isolated from their own religious inheritance so that their religion became something merely ceremonial, unable to satisfy the needs of the soul or provide spiritual strength and vitality to it. They had forgotten what their culture really represented and so could not face a crisis of survival. It is unfortunate that they always met the shock of history either by absorbing the incomers or getting merged in them. As Islam was a more dynamic stream and the rulers intolerant, the Hindus simply expanded to include or be

included into them. That is one reason why it has become a creed that embraces a multitude of beliefs and practices. It has become a sort of a hotch-potch, its own great ideas, having been missed or forgotten. No real crisis is ever exterior. It is always the one people face from within. When the Hindus did not have access to the reservoir of energy that could have sprung from their own true soil, they had to perish. It was this reservoir always that was the main-stay of a nation's intellectual life and replenished its stamina and guaranteed it its continuing health. The times were thus only a challenge to their way of thinking and this could not be met unless the beliefs and ideas of the new comers were intelligently interpreted and suitably related to the daily life. The Guru had to face this situation to restore to India its own rich cultural heritage. He was clear that minds should be deeply rooted in their own soil, and in their own culture and lofty metaphysics. First, he had to stamp out ignorance and superstition and clarify beliefs and ideas which they could turn to for real comfort. No creed that did not stand the scrutiny of reason, logic and science could have a permanent attraction for intellectual men, who, in the ultimate analysis, were the nucleus for every movement. The Guru had to tell the people that it was meaningless merely to babble about the glories of the past or of the spiritual heights to which its philosophy could soar. That might be a matter of pride but the essential thing was that it should serve as an incentive for practical action. Why should people lose themselves in idle dreamings, about the past, without applying them to the solutions of the problems of the present? The development of man's emotional nature

and the unfoldment of the spiritual side of his personality were absolutely necessary for a right living. Without cultural and spiritual regeneration, he would be steeped in materialism, greed, hatred and exploitation, as 'Man did not live by bread alone'. He should be endowed with a purpose in life, a real humanitarian aim, something to live and die for. The secret of the Guru's success really was that he gave a meaning or purpose to life which previously was a drab routine, engrossed in material pursuits.

Yet, his outlook remained universal. Although he appears as a patriot, fighting for his country, the universality and catholicity of his outlook were never impaired, for, this outlook is not inconsistent with a patriotic sense. It is the aggressive kind of nationalism that makes outlook narrow, clouded and morbid. The Guru never thought in terms of narrow loyalties. The whole country was to stand up as one man, against evil and he was to unite them, build them and give them strength. But men can never be united unless there is a bond of common interest. So, people were, first of all, made to realise that they were all living under an unjust and oppressive regime and they should learn to rise against falsehood, in whatever form it appeared. He said in 'Krishan-Avtar' :

“ਕੋਉ ਕਿਸੈ ਕੋ ਰਾਜ ਨ ਦੇ ਹੈ ॥ ਜੋ ਲੈ ਹੈ ਨਿਜ ਬਲ ਸਿਉ ਲੈ ਹੈ ।”

‘No people can have self-rule (raj), as a gift from another. It is through their own strength that they have to achieve it’.

This Raj was to come through the efforts of all and its fruits also were to be shared by all. It was such a

precious thing that it could not be bought with gold nor would it come through an easy-going life. It was always the creation of the collective endeavour, will and enterprise of the people, the fruit of their own labours, their sufferings and above all, their moral and spiritual efforts. The Guru was, thus, able to gather all sections of the people, under his banner. Both Hindus and Muslims fought side by side, for the cause he held before them so transparently. It was not a war against any Muslims or Hindus as such, nor was it for acquiring power for material gains. He would never let India destroy its soul. On the contrary, it should learn to love moral, ethical and spiritual values, above everything else. Worthy ideals were placed before the people, ideals to live and die for, ideals that would inspire and guide them in the struggle that was to be waged. As it had to be a violent struggle, the love of these ideals was all the more necessary. The humanity in man must be resuscitated and the qualities that made men truly human, resurrected. The way to human perfection was, under no circumstances, to be lost sight of. The Guru really played a part in the destiny of his country, as had never been given to any one else to play so well. He was a miracle-man. The spiritless Hindus became lions. The crafty and ruthless rulers and the parasitical Brahmins had lost their hold on men. The Guru was really too great for the people to be rightly assessed. Yet, they could look upon him with gratitude and pride for the unforgettable services he had rendered to them.

We may state here the tribute Swami Viveka Nand had paid to the Guru : "Here, in the Panjab, Guru Gobind Singh, after shedding his own blood and that of his

dearest and the nearest, for the cause of religion, even when deserted by those for whom the blood was shed, retired into the South without a word against his country, or his men, without a single word of murmur".

This, briefly, is, according to the Swami, the image of the Guru, the man destined by the Almighty to fulfil His High Purposes. In a sense, he may be called a superman, yet he did not claim for himself anything more than being a human, yoked to the service of his Master. He had in his mind the apprehension of a certain tendency among followers to deify the founder of their religion and to regard him either as a superhuman power or as God's incarnation. So, he declared emphatically, in Bachittar Natak, thus :

‘ਜੋ ਹਮ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਮੋਸਰ ਉਚਰ ਹੈ ॥ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕ ਕੁੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਪਰ ਹੈ ॥
ਮੈਂ ਹਉਂ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੋ ਦਾਸਾ ॥ ਦੇਖਣ ਆਇਓ ਜਗਤ ਤਮਾਸਾ’ ॥

‘Those who call me the Supreme Lord will fall into the pit of hell. Recognise me as His servant, let there be no doubt, whatever, on this point. I am the slave of the Supreme Being, come to watch the drama of His Creation’.

This line is very significant & shows the capacity of the Guru, in expressing great ideas, in the simplest language. The world, for him, is a drama that is being played by the Lord & he is penetrating into the Way of the Player. The implication is that unless one comes to recognise the Will and abides by it, the drama will not be truly enjoyed.

He said, God was One and was Unborn and so all the supposed creative agencies like Brahma or Maya as also all Prophets, seers and Avatars like Rama, Krishna or Vishnu, however great as human beings, were insigni-

ficant, in the context of the Supreme Reality. This is how he repudiated, in the clearest language possible, all theories of the incarnation of God, in the popular sense :

‘ਕਾਹੂੰ ਲੈ ਠੋਕ ਬੰਧੇ ਉਰ ਠਾਕਰ ਕਾਹੂੰ ਮਹੇਸ਼ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ ॥
ਕਾਹੂੰ ਕਹਯੋ ਹਰਿ ਮੰਦਰ ਮੈਂ ਹਰਿ ਕਾਹੂੰ ਮਸੀਤ ਕੇ ਬੀਚ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨਯੋ ॥
ਕਾਹੂੰ ਨੇ ਰਾਮ ਕਹਯੋ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਕਹੂੰ ਕਾਹੂੰ ਮਨੈ ਅਵਤਾਰਨ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥
ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਸਾਰ ਸਭੈ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਿਯ ਜਾਨਯੋ” ॥

ਤੇਤੀ ਸਵੈਯੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Some have firmly hugged idols to their breasts, as their deities and some speak of Shiva as God. Some say, God is in the temple of Hindus while others hold, He is in the mosques. Some call Rama and others Krishna as God, and some others believe in His incarnations. But I have forgotten all such vain dharmas because I know in my mind that the Creator is the only God to be worshipped.’

Guru Gobind Singh in 33 Swaiyyas.

Again,

“ਜੋ ਕਹੋ ਰਾਮ ਅਜੋਨ ਅਜੈ ਅਤਿ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਕੋਸਲ ਕੁਖ ਜਯੋ ਜੂ ॥
ਕਾਲ ਹੂੰ ਕਾਲ ਕਹੈਂ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ ਕਿਹ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਦੀਨ ਭਯੋ ਜੂ ॥
ਸੰਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਬਬੈਰ ਕਹਾਇ ਸੁ ਕਯੋਂ ਰਬ ਕੋ ਪਥ ਹਾਂਕ ਧਯੋ ਜੂ ॥
ਤਾਂਹੁ ਕੋ ਮਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਰਕੈ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ ਕੋਊ ਭੇਦ ਨ ਲੇ ਨ ਲਯੋ ਜੂ ॥”

ਤੇਤੀ ਸਵੈਯੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Ye say, God is unconceived and unborn. How could, then, He be born from the womb of Kaushalya, (mother of Rama) ? If God is the Death of death, then why should ye accept Him as subject to death, as Rama or Krishna surely were ? If ye take Him as Holy and Devoid of enmity, why should He have driven the chariot of Arjuna (Krishna was the charioteer of Arjuna) ? Worship,

then, only Him as your God, whose secret (Glory) none hath known nor will it ever be known'.

Guru Gobind Singh in 33 Swaiyyas

Again :

"ਮੈਂ ਨ ਗਨੇਸ਼ਹ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਮਨਾਉਂ ॥ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਿਸ਼ਨ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਧਿਆਉਂ ॥
ਕਾਨ ਸੁਨੇ ਪਹਚਾਨ ਨ ਤਿਨ ਸੋਂ ॥ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਪਗਯਨ ਸੋਂ ॥
ਮਹਾਂ ਕਾਲ ਰਖਵਾਰ ਹਸਾਰੋ ॥ ਮਹਾਂ ਲੋਹ ਮੈਂ ਕਿੰਕਰ ਥਾਰੋ" ॥
ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

'Firstly, I do not propitiate Ganesh and secondly I never meditate on Krishna or Vishnu. I have heard people eulogise them but I do not recognize them, as I love only my God's Feet. O Great-Death, be Thou my Protector, O All-Steel, I am Thy slave'.

Guru Gobind Singh in Krishan-Avtar

The use of the terms 'Great-Death' and 'All-Steel' for God, should be noted. With such clear and categorical views on the incarnation theories, as expressed above, he still believed in that theory, of course, in quite another sense. All embodied life can, in a way, be considered as His incarnation, for it is He who resides in every human soul :

"ਜਿਤਕ ਜਗਤ ਕੇ ਜੀਵ ਬਖਾਨੋ ॥ ਏਕ ਜੋਤ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਮੈ ਜਾਨੋ ॥"

ਚੌਥੀਸ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

"In all living beings that we speak of, the One Light pervadeth".

Guru Gobind Singh in Chaubis-Avtar.

In this sense, every human being is God's incarnation. Yet, the person who had also realised Him and had become one with Him, should be taken as the most perfect incarnation, Self-realisation and God-realisation being identical terms. Thus, it is always the indwelling Divine Spirit that is the truest incarnation. It is this

same Divine Light, the highest and the most perfect Light, that appears in the world as a Guru or an Avtar, or a saint, or a Prophet, It speaks through what may be called the voice of his conscience. This inner self itself becomes the true Enlightener. All others have to tread the path as shown by the Enlightened Ones, so as to get united with Him. When ever God's Light enters in the soul of a person, It is correct to say that God had taken birth in him. The phenomenon of such a birth can not, therefore, be an exceptional historical event confined only to a particular place or period but takes place off and on in every age, to renew the Eternal Wisdom and to guide and serve humanity. It is always the one Word of God that speaks to men in all ages. It is He who speaks through their lives and teachings. The Gurus, the saints, the Prophets, the seers and the illuminated ones, who had appeared at rare intervals, were first attuned to the Supreme Will and in consequence, He revealed Himself to them. He cannot therefore be limited to one incarnation. When awakening takes place in any soul & it merges in God, then the individual and God become one, as it were. This is how God can be said to have taken birth for the regeneration of man. Guru Gobind Singh was, in the same way, His best incarnation or His manifestation, as could ever be conceived in human terms. God's revelations became his Word or his teachings i.e. God had revealed Himself, through him. The Guru confirms it, thus;

"ਜੋ ਨਿਜ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮੇ ਸੋ ਕਹਾ ਸੋ ਕਹਿਓ" ਜਗ ਮਾਹਿ" ॥

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

'I say to the world what the Lord wanteth me to say.'

'Guru Gobind Singh in Baohittar Natak'

Again :

“ਨ ਕਾਨ ਕਾਹੂੰ ਕੀ ਧਰੇਂ ॥ ਕਹਿਯੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਸੁ ਮੈਂ ਕਰੋਂ” ॥

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘I do what He tells me to do. I am not under anybody else’s obligation’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

Again :

“ਜਿਮ ਤਿਨ ਕਹੀ ਇਨੈ ਤਿਮ ਕਹਿਯੋ ॥ ਔਰ ਕਿਸੁ ਤੇ ਬੈਰ ਨ ਗਹਿਯੋ” ॥

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘What He revealeth to me, the same I say. I do not say it for any ill-will against anybody’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

The birth of a Guru is thus a rare phenomenon, intended to fulfil God’s Own High Purposes. When the hour is darkest and the World is marching under tyrannical conditions, a Prophet is born. When Religion loses its true basis, which is the inner life of the Spirit, and becomes mechanical, He manifests Himself, through perfected human beings, who get merged in Him, after destroying the self, in all its manifestations, Guru Arjan says :

‘ਦੂਤਹ ਦਹਨ ਭਇਆ ਗੋਬਿੰਦੁ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਇਆ’ ॥ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

‘When God manifests Himself in man, evil forces are destroyed’.

Guru Arjan in Asa.

And this, again, is the sense in which the Guru, in the manner of Christ, describes himself as the Son of God. It should never be taken to mean that he claimed any special privileges for himself. He did not believe in human intercession to get forgiveness for sins. He was quite

clear in his mind that there was no such thing as exclusive revelation, no direct emanation from Heavens, no rewards without undergoing a life of discipline, service, piety and love, no promise of salvation without self-control, and no trust in absolute philosophies and dogmas. All men were judged by their actions and not in terms of any allegiance to this or that person, Love and service were the only means to secure a place in Heaven and these means were open to all. Why should, then, there be any mediator to reach Him, when He is directly accessible to all, high or low, black or white? There is hidden in every soul the Divine Spark, which when kindled, becomes a flame that burns out the self or the ego, resulting in union with the Supreme, and this can take place at any time. When it actually happens, unity with Him is attained and then the inner voice becomes the Voice of God. Whosoever is thus led by the Spirit of God, is the Son of God or is His Prophet or His Messenger. It is in this sense that the Supreme Spirit is incarnated in holy men and this same Spirit was made concrete and personal in Guru Gobind Singh too. This is what may also be called spiritual transformation. But it does not connote ceasing to be human, in any way. Of course, then, the values of life are not earthly or ephemeral goods, like money, power, reputation or prestige but the invisible Treasure of the Eternal Spirit. The things of time and space are renounced, so that there is neither the fear of death nor the fear of the power of the tyrants. There can then be no hatred left for any one, for, all begin to appear as belonging to the kingdom of God. Every atom appears illuminated with His Light and, in fact, the whole creation seems flooded with love in the one sea of life, as the Guru himself says :

‘ਜਤ੍ਰ ਤਤ੍ਰ ਦਿਸਾ ਵਿਸਾ ਹੋਇ ਫੈਲਿਉ ਅਨੁਰਾਗ’ ॥ ਜਾਪੁ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦
 wherever I look I find Him manifest, in the form
 of love’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Jap.

The soul gets enriched, through love and reverence,
 for the poor, the needy and the forlorn. It is hate that
 destroys but love creates, builds and triumphs.

This is the background why the Guru having clear-cut views on incarnations, still had, in his great heart, reverence for spiritual leaders of humanity, who had preached the essence of true religion—Love of God, expressed through the love of man. In his receptive heart there was room for all seers, even though he did not agree with them, in all things. He studied and wrote freely from Puranas and Shastras because he felt that it was God always that spoke and acted through inspired men, and these men could not be the monopoly of a sect, race or religion. They belonged to all. Also the inspiration that the inspired men once had, was never exhausted nor did it come, by fits and starts, but was a perpetual process. Every communal or sectarian strife, therefore, was meaningless and should cease, as all religions were true, in a sense. Men and women, professing different faiths, were brothers and sisters. The All-loving nature of God presupposed that no people were His chosen ones. It was entirely wrong to suppose that a particular religion was alone the custodian of great values of life. This showed a kind of spiritual vanity, conceit and arrogance. The Guru wanted to unite all, so as to belong to the Brotherhood of the Spirit and therefore respected the great Truths of all world religions. He transcended churches, temples

and mosques. He believed that the worship of Love (of the Lord and humanity) was above all religions. He said;

‘ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ’ ॥ ਸੁਧਾ ਸਵੈਯੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦
‘Those who love find Him’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in a Swaiyya.

All true religions had come from the same Divine Source, of course, in varying degrees of purity, in the process of transmissions as also depending on the capacity of those through whom they came. Yet, God, the Ultimate Reality, was the same for all, He did not limit Himself to one form of religion and sent messages to the world from time to time. All religions were, thus, different approaches towards the same Divine Reality. Countless streams flowed from various directions to join the same ocean. All paths over the hills led to the same summit. So also, all faiths had, as their goals, the same Divine Essence and therefore must be looked upon with reverence. The Guru said :

‘ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਔ ਨਿਮਾਜ ਓਈ ਮਾਨੁਸ ਸਭੇਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ
ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ ॥ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਅਦੇਵ ਜਛ ਗੰਧਰਬ ਤੁਰਕ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨਯਾਰੇ ਨਯਾਰੇ
ਦੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਸ ਕੋ ਸੁਭਾਉ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੈ ਨੈਨ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਨ ਏਕੈ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਨ
ਖਾਕ ਬਾਦ ਆਤਿਸ਼ ਔ ਆਬ ਕੋ ਰੁਲਾਉ ਹੈ ॥ ਅਲਹ ਅਭੇਖ ਸੋਈ ਪੁਰਾਨ
ਔ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਓਈ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੈ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਬਨਾਉ ਹੈ’ ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘The temple and the mosque are one, the Hindu worship and the Muslim Nimaz are one, all men are the same though, through different influences, they appear different. Gods, demons, Yakshas, heavenly singers, Turks, Hindus have, in different circumstances, put on different garbs but essentially they are all the same. All

have similar eyes and ears and have other body structures composed of the same elements—earth, fire, air and water. Allah and Ram are the same, the Puranas and the Quran are the same, being the manifestations of the One Lord and revealing the same Hand of the Creator behind them’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

Again : ‘ਕੋਊ ਭਇਆ ਮੁੰਡੀਆ ਸੰਨਯਾਸੀ ਕੋਊ ਜੋਗੀ ਭਇਉ ਕੋਈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਾਰੀ
ਕੋਈ ਜਤੀ ਅਨਮਾਨਬੋ ॥ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੋਊ ਰਾਫਜੀ ਇਮਾਮ ਸਾਫੀ
ਮਾਨੁਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਚਾਨਬੋ ॥ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੀਮ ਸੋਈ ਰਾਜਕ
ਰਹੀਮ ਓਈ ਦੂਸਰੋ ਨ ਭੇਦ ਕੋਈ ਮੂਲ ਭਰਮ ਮਾਨਬੋ ॥ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ
ਸਭ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਏਕ, ਏਕ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਜੋਤ ਜਾਨਬੋ’ ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Some have their heads shaved, some call themselves holy monks, some set themselves up as Yogis or as some other kinds of ascetics. Some are Hindus and others are Muslims, among whom are further divisions into Shias and Sunnis. Yet, never forget that all human beings are of one race. Whether one calls Him (God), the Creator or the Beneficent Lord or the Sustainer or the Merciful Lord, He is the same God. Do not have any illusion that there can be any other, as all ultimately serve Him, Who is the Divine Teacher of all. Know that His Light pervadeth all and therefore all are His Manifestations’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

The emperor Bahadur Shah, the son of Aurangzeb, once, during his discussions with the Guru on religious beliefs, remarked that although there were in the land two Ways—the Hindu and the Muslim Ways—the Muslim Way was the right Way. The Guru said, the two Ways,

as they stood at the time, were no Ways, as they quarrelled among themselves, over small matters. Though Ram and Allah were the same, yet the worshippers of Allah would not tolerate those of Rama. Also both of them had become superstitious in many ways, so much so, that if the Hindus turned to the East in prayer, the Muslims would not like it, as, for them, the West was the right direction for prayer. The Guru added, he would create the third way that would respect the other two and would not quarrel with them over petty matters. Then, the emperor boasted that those who accepted the Kalma were liberated. The Guru sent a counterfeit coin to the bazar with the Kalma inscribed over it, in the normal way. The coin was rejected everywhere. The Guru told the emperor that if the coin with a Kalma on it was not accepted even in his own empire, how could a bad Muslim deceive the All-knowing Creator ? So, actions and not labels really mattered.

There is another interesting anecdote during discussions with the same emperor, at some other time. Bahadur Shah had said, there was one God, but the Guru humorously, but pertinently, remarked, that there were three Gods. As the emperor did not understand what it meant, the Guru explained to him, thus : "There is a God of the Hindus and there is a God of the Muslims. Both Gods remain at dagger's drawn. Yet, there is the third God of his Khalsas that loves all His People, including Hindus & Muslims".

The Guru, in one of his hymns, dealt with above, had gone deep into the heart of the problem. He had meant that inspite of differences of race,

colour, country, nationality or of the circumstances under which people lived and worked, their problems, the solution of those problems and their ultimate destiny, were the same. As religion had to provide answers to all problems, which were essentially the same for all men, their religions, in essential aspects, could not be very different. The message of a true religion, then, could not but be of a universal nature, having its appeal for all, nor could that message be circumscribed to a particular time or place. True, Mohammad had declared himself as the last Prophet. Orthodox Christians had similarly held the view that Jesus was the final manifestation of the Divine. The Hindus also, as we have noted already, affirmed a similar Avtar-theory. But the question of questions is, how could Mohammad or Jesus or Rama or Krishna, close the door for future revelations? That would be putting a limit to the limitlessness of the Supreme. When people forgot the fundamental fact of the Infinity of God, their vision must become confused, narrow and clouded. They started, then, to give to the founder of their religion a place that really belonged to God. It was in this context that the Guru had brought out the insignificance of Avtars and Prophets, however great they might have been, in relation to man. They were all subject to Death, while God alone was Deathless. This is what the Guru said in Akal Ustat :

‘ਏਕ ਸਿਵ ਭਏ ਏਕ ਗਏ ਏਕ ਫੇਰ ਭਏ ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਕੇ ਅਵਤਾਰ
ਭੀ ਅਨੇਕ ਹੈ’ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਅਰੁ ਬਿਸ਼ਨੁ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਔਰ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਕੇਤੇ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ
ਸਮੂਹ ਕੇ ਹੋਇ ਹੈ ਬਿਤਏ ਹੈ ॥ ਮੋਨਦੀ ਮਦਾਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਅਸੁਨੀ ਕੁਮਾਰ
ਕੇਤੇ ਅੰਸਾ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਬਸ ਭਏ ਹੈ ॥ ਪੀਰ ਔ ਪਿਕਾਂਬਰ ਕੇਤੇ
ਗਨੇ ਨ ਪਰਤ ਏਤੇ ਭੂਮਿ ਹੀ ਰੇ ਹੂੰ ਕੈ ਫੇਰਿ ਭੂਮਿ ਹੀ ਮਿਲਏ ਹੈ” ॥

“Shivas were born, died and were again born. There have been many so-called incarnations of Rama and Krishna. There have been many Brahmas and Vishnus, many Vedas, Puranas and collection of Simrities. They all came into existence and then went into oblivion. There have been many orthodox Muslim saints, preachers and incomplete avatars, who perished in the end. There have been numerous Pirs and Prophets, whose number could not be even counted. From dust they emanated and unto dust they returned’.

Again :

‘ਕਿਤੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਸੇ ਕੀਟ ਕੋਟੈ’ ਉਪਾਏ ॥ ਉਸਾਰੇ ਗੜ੍ਹੇ ਫੇਰ ਮੋਟੇ ਬਨਾਏ ॥
ਅਗਾਧੇ ਅਭੈ ਆਦਿ ਅਦੁ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ॥ ਪਰੇ ਅੰਪਰਾ ਪਰਮ ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸੀ ॥
ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

“He hath created millions of Krishnas who are mere worms before Him. He first createth, giveth them shape, then destroyeth and then again createth. He is Unfathomable, Fearless Primal, Unrivalled, Imperishable. He is beyond all things, He is from the Beginning and is Perfect in His Splendour (We should note that though the Guru had nothing but good will & respect for all seers & saints, he is drawing the above image of God, to bring out, in a way, the insignificance of men like Krishna and others in comparison to Him, however great and highly respected they might otherwise have been) For a detailed elaboration, see chapter XVI”.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

Again, he puts the same thing, rather satirically, thus,

‘ਕੇਵਲ ਕਾਲ ਈ ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥ ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤ ਅਨੰਤ ਮੂਰਤ ਗੜਨ ਭੰਜਨ-
ਹਾਰ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਨਿੰਦ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਜੋਨ ਕੇ ਸਮ ਸਤ੍ਰ ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਕੌਨ
ਬਾਟ ਪਰੀ ਤਿਸੈ ਪਥ ਸਾਰਥੀ ਰਥ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਤਾਤ ਮਾਤ ਨ ਜਾਤ ਜਾਕਰ

ਪ੍ਰਤ੍ਰੁ ਪ੍ਰੰਤ ਮੁਕੰਦ ॥ ਕੌਨ ਕਾਜ ਕਹਾਹਿਗੇ ਤੇ ਆਨ ਦੇਵਕਿ ਨੰਦ ॥
 ਦੇਵ ਦੇਂਤ ਦਿਸਾ ਵਿਸਾ ਜਿਹ ਕੀਨ ਸਰਬ ਪਸਾਰ ॥ ਕੌਨ ਉਪਮਾ ਤੌਨ
 ਕੋ ਮੁਖ ਲੇਤ ਨਾਮ ਮੁਰਾਰਿ” ॥

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਕਾਫੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

“God alone is the Creator, the Beginning and the End of all, the Infinite, the Fashioner and the Destroyer. To Him, blame or praise are the same, for, He hath neither enemy nor friend. Then what need had He to become the driver of Arjuna’s chariot (Refers to Shri Krishna) ? He hath no father, mother, caste, son or grandson and is the Bestower of salvation. Then why should He come to the world to be called the son of Devki (The Guru means to say that to think of Him in finite terms is to limit His Limitlessness and to display one’s own morbid and narrow outlook) ? When it is He who hath created gods, demons, the eight directions and all manifestations, what glory is it to Him to be called Murari (one who had killed the Mūr demon)” ?

Guru Gobind Singh in Shabad Hazare,

We have dealt with the Guru’s views on Avtar-theory quite comprehensively. Yet, people start to think in narrow terms. Often it is the overzealous followers who, in their anxiety to propagate the mission of the founder and to instil in their coreligionists loyalty and devotion to him, indulge in extravagant exaggerations about him and in consequence, though quite in good faith, disfigure and distort his image. The association of miracles with the founder’s name is the direct result of this mental outlook. Deities too seem to be the creation of admirers, out of the abundance of their love and devotion as also the

result of a good deal of muddled thinking. Conscious of this irrepressible weakness in the devotees, of miraculising the founder, the Guru had asserted, times without number that he was in every way as human as the rest of mankind. He did not want stories of supernatural deeds surround him. He told his people that he was made of flesh and bones like others and was subject to the laws of God and Nature. So, it was not belittling but glorifying him to suppose that he too was required to fight sin like other men and overcome its dark influences. His greatness really lay not in any so-called supernatural powers he was supposed to have acquired but in having attained the highest spiritual stature. When that stature was in the process of building, sin might have come to tempt him but it failed to deflect him after the state of perfection had been reached, through self-control and discipline and through the same Divine Grace as was available to every human being. He had attuned himself to the Divine Will by destroying the tiny self. Was not this achievement the real miracle of his life, something of which one could be justly proud? He made sacrifices, unsurpassed in human history and yet was happy. Was not this the greatest miracle of his life? And this miracle had come about through spiritual strength, generated by coming into harmony with Him, so that whatever happened to him was for him a thing of joy. Guru Arjan had said :

“ਜੋ ਵਰਤਾਏ ਸਾਈ ਜੁਗਤਿ” ॥ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

‘Whatever He Willeth, that a right.’

Guru Arjan in Gauri

Yet, this was a personal achievement, gathered through his own labours. He had done a lot more. He was able to

give his people a new vision and a new hope. He gave them an iron will and unbending resolution, to stand firm, in all privations. He infused life into their dead bones, so that sparrows had become hawks. He gave them strength of character that would not yield to the baser self. The steel in his hand had become a symbol of power over his self. To rule over one's own passions meant for him to rule over the world, as Guru Nanak had visualised, thus :

“ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੇ ਜਗ ਜੀਤੁ” ॥ ਜਪੁਜੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ।

‘By subduing the mind, the world is conquered’

Guru Nanak in Japji.

When lust, wrath, jealousy and anger take hold of a man, he falls. Real power lies not in physical strength but in character, which alone can exalt an individual or a nation, and it comes about by attuning to His Will. Guru Amar Dass says :

‘ਸਾ ਸਿਧਿ ਸਾ ਕਰਮਾਤ ਹੈ ਅਚਿੰਤੁ ਕਰੇ ਜਿਸੁ ਦਾਤਿ’ ॥ ਸੌਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘The power that God gives spontaneously, out of His Grace, is the real miracle’.

Guru Amar Dass in Sorath.

And what is more beautiful and of greater value than the miracle of a spiritual transformation? The Guru's interpretation of religion was always in terms of a spiritual realisation of God's Kingdom. The service of the sick, the down-trodden and the lowliest of human beings and pulling them from out of the morass into which they had fallen, were his greatest achievements. Nothing could be grander in a man than that he had achieved moral and spiritual perfection himself and could produce the same perfection in others. What greater compli-

ment could be paid to him than this that he was a perfect man, being perfectly attuned to the Will of God ? That was the real miracle of his life.

As regards men's aspiration for acquiring the so-called miraculous powers and the display of those powers to other people, the Guru regarded these things as ignoble, born out of a hankering for fame and applause, or at best, for material gains. They had nothing in common with spiritual living which was the essence of a religious life. The Guru says :

‘ਨ ਜੰਤ੍ਰ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਤੰਤ੍ਰ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਵਸ ਆਵਈ’ ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ, ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

“The Lord cannot be owned through the art of practising occult powers, or through spells and charms”.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

Again :

“ਨਾਟਕ ਚੇਟਕ ਕੀਏ ਕੁਕਾਜਾ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਗਨ ਕੇ ਆਵਤ ਲਾਜਾ” ॥

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘God's people are ashamed of indulging in unholy tricks of supra-physical achievements’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Bachittar Natak.

Again :

“ਗੈਨ ਮੈਂ ਉਡਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਜਲ ਮੈਂ ਰਹਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਗਯਾਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਜਕ
ਜਾਰੇਈ ਮਰਤ ਹੈ” ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Many fly in the air and many abide in the seas, but without Divine knowledge they simply burn themselves in the fire of ego’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

Again :

‘ਨਭ ਕੋ ਉਡੇ ਤੇ ਜੋਪੇ ਨਾਰਾਯਨ ਪਾਯਤ ਅਨਿਲ ਅਕਾਸ਼ ਪੰਛੀ ਡੋਲਬੋ
ਕਰਤ ਹੈ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ, ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘If God could be realised by flying in the skies, the bird, anal, ever wandereth in the firmament’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat

Again :

‘ਜਲ ਕੇ ਤਰੈਯਾ ਕੋ ਗੰਗੋਰੀ ਸੀ ਕਹਤ ਜਗ ਆਗ ਕੇ ਭਛੈਯਾ ਸੋ ਚਕੋਰ
ਸਮ ਮਾਨੀਆ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ, ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Those who claim to float on water are nothing better than black flies, and those who eat fire may be likened to chakors’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

The point emphasised in the above satires, is not that these powers cannot be acquired but that the possession of these so-called powers does not awaken the soul for its liberation, the only thing that matters to a man of God. Just as outer physical restraints may generate physical powers so also mental restraints and discipline may produce mental powers. But what of that to a man of God ? Like wealth these powers may be all right to meet certain physical needs but they cannot awaken the soul to generate spiritual strength. Birds fly in the air and chakors eat fires but this does not make them spiritual. Just as knowledge with all the powers that come with it may create darkness for the soul and thus become an accursed thing, so also every kind of power that does not touch the soul, brings no strength to it. It is the seeking for God, within the soul, that enriches the mind and brings infinite power. Therefore spiritual awakening is the only thing worth

striving for. That is how the Guru looked at the problem of miracles etc. etc.

He was in Agra once, with the emperor Bahadur Shah, when a Saiyyad requested him to perform a miracle, as a proof of his holiness. Now, he knew the sort of miracle the Saiyyad, who looked at all things in material terms, desired. The Guru told him, in his characteristically humorous style, that the emperor, seated before him, was quite capable of performing miracles. He had the power to make a poor man rich. He had also the power to make a rich man poor, by snatching from him all that he had. The Saiyyad was not satisfied with that reply. The Guru then shewed a gold coin to him and said that the coin in his hands too was a miracle, as it could purchase anything. Lastly, he drew out his sword and said—this sword was another miracle, as it could subdue tyrants. The Guru wanted to impress upon the audience the fact that search for miracles should not proceed on the lines of the people's thinking. They should rise above petty material interests and look at the moral and spiritual aspects of life. Even seekers were misguided, if they were inclined to think in material terms. Otherwise, why should the violations of God's natural laws engage them? Why should they not accept those laws as the unchangeable Will of God? But people were accustomed to judge the holiness of men in terms of the power they had acquired, to break God's Laws. The Guru called this approach itself as unholy and blasphemous. It was like posing as God's rival and running counter to His Will. The real miracle worth performing, was the inner change and the same, was to be brought about by the power of the Name. Guru Amar Dass says :

‘ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸੈ ਏਹਾ ਸਿਧਿ ਏਹਾ ਕਰਮਾਤਿ’ ।

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘Nanak, the true miracle happens when, through the Guru’s Grace, God enters the mind’.

It is when people forget that spirituality is the real miracle of life, that they hanker after material gains and, in consequence, wander in illusion & wilderness. Then it is the ego or the self that goes about attired in various forms and tricks them, whether they know it or not. Sometimes it is sheer greed and at other times it is a mad run for fame, wealth or other worldly gains. The Guru, therefore, always tried to turn people’s attention from the pursuits that yielded to them no fruits.

Once, during the Anandpur blockade, he happened to discharge an arrow with a golden point. It was a wonderful feat of skill. But the besiegers thought that only a miracle-man could have thrown the arrow to such a long distance. The Guru replied, through another arrow with a letter attached to its end, stating therein that for a man of God, aspiration for the so-called miracles, was unholy and that what he had done was, at best, an achievement, in archery.

From the above elaboration on miraculous powers, the Guru’s views on the subject of miracles are, abundantly clear. He should, therefore, be looked upon not as a miracle-worker but as a man, of course, a perfected human being. The study of his life is already most ennobling, without attaching even a special Divinity to his name.

CHAPTER II

Sword unsheathed as a painful necessity.

“ਚੂ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਰ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰਗੁਜ਼ਸਤ ॥

ਹਲਾਲਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬਸਮਜ਼ੋਰਿ ਦਸਤ” । ਜ਼ਫਰਨਾਮਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

“When the affairs were past all other remedies, then, as a last resort, it was justified to unsheathe the sword”.

We have now before us an adequately comprehensive image of the Guru. His great humanity, his unparalleled moral and spiritual grandeur, his life-long and devoted services to his country and his sacrifices in the cause of the weak and the down-trodden, are things that cannot fail to elevate men in spirit and make them good, happy, and great. It is really a wonder that a man in flesh and blood could have been so great as he was and could have achieved, in a short period of just forty two years, all that any human being could have achieved. To mortal men, he appears a gigantic spiritual figure, composed of elements different from those of the

rest of mankind. Those who are devoted to him have, thus, every right and justification to feel proud of him. Yet, God had willed and chosen him to play a terrific role, in the drama of life, to meet a most difficult situation. And it is really surprising that inspite of that kind of role he had still retained the lusture and beauty of a fascinating and magnetic personality. There is no doubt that the grandeur of that personality would have shone with much greater brilliance if he were not called upon to perform the kind of task he did. Men of religion have generally found it hard to reconcile sword with spirituality. They question the wisdom of and the moral justification for the philosophy of the sword, which seems to them not only a complete departure from the philosophy of life, followed by his predecessors but a negation of all that they stood for. Many peace loving people have gone to the length of asserting that he had modified the teachings of Guru Nanak and had evolved a new pattern of thought, different from that of the other Gurus. All this is untrue. It only shows that they have failed to understand the man and his message and have judged him by standards entirely out of context with the situation he had to face.

For a correct appraisal of the difficult role he was called upon to play we must first go back to the times that had produced the Sikh Gurus. We should study those times, rather closely, in order to realise adequately why it had become a necessary duty to organise and lead a movement of violent resistance. For this purpose we might refer to Macauliffe who has quoted extensively from the written accounts of Muslim

historians, to present to the world the true picture of the times before the advent of Guru Nanak. It will be helpful if we begin with examples he has given of the treatment of the Hindus, then a subject race, by the Muslim conquerors of India. There may be some exaggerations too in these accounts, but even making an allowance for these exaggerations, the conclusions arrived at can hardly be denied.

Our study may commence from the time of Qutabuddin, the man who had gained notoriety for being a soul-less fanatic. It was a matter of just a routine with him to get Hindu temples demolished and mosques built in their places. He plundered enormous wealth, massacred lakhs of people and burnt several libraries of ancient Sanskrit works—all this done without the least remorse.

After him, appeared, on the Indian scene, Allauddin Khilji, the man who had ruthlessly put to the sword adult Hindu males, carried women to his home, with all their gold, silver and jewels, and made, out of them, as many as twenty thousand maidens as his private slaves. Yet, he was happy that he had perpetrated this barbarity for the glory of Islam. He had once asked the Qazis as to what the Islamic law had prescribed for the Hindu 'infidels'. The Qazi promptly replied that Hindus were like the earth. If silver were demanded of them, they should be ready to offer gold, with utmost humility, and if a Muslim desired to spit, they should open their mouths wide enough to let him do so, for, God had created them as mere slaves of the Muslims. The Prophet had ordained that if

they did not accept Islam, they should be imprisoned and finally put to death and their property confiscated. On hearing the reply, the monarch smiled and said: he had never waited for the interpretation of the sacred Islamic law, in his dealings with the 'infidels'. As a matter of fact, he had already issued orders that the Hindus should be allowed to possess corn and coarse cloth just sufficient to last for six months. He was such a diabolical brute that he had, without the least remorse or compunction, set flowing rivers of blood of many unfortunate people that became the victims of his wrath. Historians say that in front of his palace were generally seen corpses of forty to fifty Hindus beaten to death with merciless savagery for the most trifling offences. He had got even his own brothers and nephews flayed alive on mere suspicion of disloyalty. In fact, he had gone much further. He got the victims' flesh cooked and then their children were forced to eat the same. Whatever remained after that operation, was thrown to the elephants, so as to be trampled upon by the animals.

Coming to Mohd. Bin Tughlak, we may cite Ibn Batuta, who describes him as a man of the most inexorable and impetuous character. As an instance, he says that the Delhi inhabitants had once revolted against some of his oppressive acts and had written to him a letter of remonstrance. Immediately, he went into extreme rage and sent orders that they must quit forthwith for Daulatabad, a place so far off as to take forty days to reach it. The order was so carefully obeyed that when later a search of the city was made, only a blind man and another bed-ridden man, were found to be

left behind. They were treated as offenders for disobeying orders, meriting severest punishment. The bed-ridden man was thrown out from the top storey to fall dead on the ground. The blind man was dragged to Daulatabad, held by his feet, and in the process of being dragged in this manner, all his limbs dropped off in the way. Only a leg was left which was thrown into the city, so that the orders could be said to have been obeyed literally.

And Feroze Shah Tughlak surpassed his predecessors, in acts of cruelty. He caused all the temples of the city of Bhopal to be destroyed and the idols removed from there and placed in front of the fort. Then he got them bathed daily with the blood of as many as a thousand Hindus.

He was followed by Sikandar Khan Lodhi, who had ordered a Hindu to be put to death simply because he had the courage to claim that Hindu religion was also true like Islam. It was this same Sikandar who had tortured a holy person of the stature of Kabir, simply on account of his progressive views.

The above accounts refer to the period before Guru Nanek was born. But that Guru's own times were no better. He was himself an eye-witness of the cruelties during Babar's invasion, which he described in these pathetic terms :

‘ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਡਰਾਇਆ ॥
ਆਪੇ ਦੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲ ਚੜਾਇਆ ॥
ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥
ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕੋ ਮਾਰੇ

ਤਾਂ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹ ਮਾਰੇ
ਪੈ ਵਗੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ' ॥

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'O Lord, Thou hast owned Khuresan and terrified India. Thou takest not the blame on thyself and sendest the myrmidons of Death, disguised as Mughals. Intense is our suffering, O Lord, feelest Thou no compassion? O Creator, Thou belongest to all. If a powerful party attacketh another powerful party I may then have no protest to make. But if a terrible lion falleth on a defenceless herd, then the master of the herd must answer',

The above lines reveal how agonised the Guru was at what he saw. But he was not unaware of his countrymen's failings too. He saw before him a terrible picture of people sunk to the depth of degradation. History bears testimony to the fact that the times which produced him were the darkest, indeed. The land was plunged in complete chaos—political, religious, moral, social and economical. Lodhi dynasty was reigning only in name. Actually it had broken up, unable to afford any consolation to the people, groaning in the midst of uninterrupted scenes of bloodshed and tyranny. The country was hopelessly weak and disorganised, in the political sense also, and attracted outsiders for its riches and beauty. Guru Nanak has himself described the state of affairs in respect of both the rulers and the ruled, thus :

“ਕਲਿ ਹੋਈ ਕੁਤੇ ਮੁਹੀ ਖਾਜੁ ਹੋਆ ਮੁਰਦਾਰ” ॥ ਵਾਰ ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'O My lord, what evil times have come! Men have faces like dogs that eat carrion'.

Guru Nanak in Sarang.

Again : 'ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ' ।

ਵਾਰ ਮਲਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

•Kings are tigers and their officials are dogs’.

Guru Nanak in Var Malar.

Again : ‘ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸ਼ਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਿਆ ॥

ਕੂੜ ਅਮਾਵਸੁ ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹ ਚੜਿਆ ॥

ਹਉ ਭਾਲਿ ਵਿਕੁਨੀ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਆਧੋਰੇ ਰਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ” ॥

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“This Kal Age is a drawn sword. Kings are butchers and justice hath fled, In this dark night of utter falsehood the moon of truth is never seen to rise. I am bewildered and in this darkness know not the way”.

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh.

The people had lost their moorings entirely. They were poor, illiterate and fed on superstition. The inhuman and debasing treatment they received at the hands of the rulers had killed their self-respect. In fact, they had become too weak to offer even a protest. They had stopped to think that they were self-respecting men and believed that their destiny had willed it so, and they had no choice but to accept resignedly. Those who still retained some human dignity, had lost the will to resist. The sturdy Rajputs had forgotten their traditions of bravery and considered it an honour to give to the rulers their daughters in marriage. The Hindu corporate life had completely disappeared, due to the rigidity of caste distinctions. When the people were compelled to follow the callings in terms of the castes bequeathed to them from their forefathers, it must result in disunity, social tyrannies and distrust of each other. In fact, castes had greatly accentuated the existing divisions. The study of Vedas and other Hindu scriptures was forbidden to one class of people, called

Sudras. This meant that even the solace of spiritual inspiration, the natural right of every human being, was denied to them. They were not qualified, like other Hindus, for the attainment of salvation, through performance of Vedic rites. Their touch and even their shadow were considered as polluting. There were classes among them who were treated not only as untouchables but also as unapproachables and even as unseeables. If any of them were to hear the Vedic Mantras, his ears must be stopped with molten lead or wax, and if he were to read the Vedas, his tongue must be cut out and further, if he dared to possess sacred books, his body was to be cut in twain. Manu had said :

‘ਸੂਦਰ ਕੋ ਧਰਮ ਕਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਨ ਕਰ । ਬ੍ਰਹਮਨ ਬਦਚਲਣ ਭੀ
ਪੂਜਨਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਸੂਦਰ ਜੇਤੰਦਰੀ ਭੀ ਪੂਜਣ ਲਾਇਕ ਨਹੀਂ’ ।

‘Do not teach religion of the Sudra. A Brahmin of bad character was qualified for being worshipped but a Sudra practising even continence was not qualified’.

Women also were Sudras, in a sense, and beyond the pale of religion. They must not take part in Vedic rites. A Brahmin, as we shall see later on, actually contended with Guru Gobind Singh that religious instructions ought not to be communicated to the Sudras and to women. Thus, the whole national structure was disrupted into sects, tied up in water-tight compartments. The worst thing about it was that spiritual stagnation had completely weakened and demoralised the people. Guru Nanak had put it, thus :

‘ਸਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਦੁਇ ਛਪਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਕੂੜ ਫਿਰੈ ਪਰਧਾਨ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ’ ॥

ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘O Lalo, modesty and faith have fled and falsehood

reigneth supreme'.

Religion had lost its vitality wholly and had become a matter of ceremonies, formalities, ritualism, superficial worship and propitiation of idols, gods and goddesses. The moon, the sun, the earth, the water and the sky were worshipped and devotions to cemeteries and cremation grounds were offered. How could religion, under these conditions, retain its vigour and strength? It must inevitably result in weakening the entire nation. The lowering of religious values and the moral deterioration into which both Hindus and Muslims, the two religious communities of the land, had fallen, were described by Bhai Gurdas also, thus :—

'ਚਾਰ ਵਰਨ ਚਾਰ ਮਜ਼ਹਬਾ ਜਗ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੇ ॥
 ਖੁਦੀ ਬਖੀਲੀ ਤਕਬਰੀ ਖਿੰਚੋਤਾਣ ਕਰੇਨ ਧਿਛਾਣੇ ॥
 ਗੰਗ ਬਨਾਰਸ ਹਿੰਦੂਆ ਮਕਾ ਕਾਬਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੇ ॥
 ਸੁੰਨਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣ ਦੀ ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਵੁ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੋਭਾਣੇ ॥
 ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਕਹਾਇੰਦੇ ਇਕ ਨਾਮ ਦੁਇ ਰਾਹੁ ਭੁਲਾਣੇ ॥
 ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਭੁਲਾਇਕੈ ਮੋਹੇ ਲਾਲਚ ਦੁਨੀ ਸੈਤਾਨੇ ॥
 ਸਚ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ਰਹ ਗਿਆ ਖਹ ਮਰਦੇ ਬਾਮਣ ਮਉਲਾਣੇ ॥
 ਸਿਰੋਂ ਨ ਮਿਟੈ ਆਵਨ ਜਾਣੇ ॥ ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ॥

“The Muslims and the Hindus were broken up into four sects and four castes, respectively. Enwrapped in pride, jealousy and arrogance, they entered into aimless conflicts. The Hindus recognised the Ganges and Benaras as sacred, while the Muslims recognised Mecca and Kaaba. Islam was reduced to mere circumcision and Hinduism to the frontal mark and the sacrificial thread (*i.e.* mere outer form of their religious life had remained and the path of God was forgotten). Although Ram and Rahim represented the same God, yet, in ignorance and superstition, His

worshippers had diverged along two paths. They had forgotten altogether the teachings of their Holy Books—the Vedas and the Quran—and were beguiled by the Satan into ways of avarice and attachment, Truth was thrown aside, the Brahmin and the Mullah destroying each other in disputatious squables. So, the cycle of births and deaths had become inescapable for them''.

Thus, the licentiousness of the rulers and the abject slavery, moral depravation and spiritual wretchedness of the ruled had created a situation in which sensitive people could find escape only in renouncing the world, with all its responsibilities. The reformers of the time did nothing to change this sorry state of affairs. They rather helped it to grow through misplaced emphasis on renunciation. Referring to Ramanand, Gorakh, Chaitan, Kabir and Vallabh, Cunningham says :

‘These good and able men appear to have been so impressed with the nothingness of this life, that they deemed the amelioration of man’s social conditions to be unworthy of a thought. They aimed chiefly at emancipation from priestcraft, or from the grossness of idolatory and polytheism. They formed pious associations of contented Quietists or they gave themselves up to the contemplation of futurity in the hope of approaching bliss, rather than called upon their fellow creatures to throw aside every social as well as religious trammel, and to arise a new people freed from the debasing corruption of ages. They perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nations, and their sects remain to this day as they left them’.

In consequence, the country was sunk to such low

depths of utter helplessness that Mahmud Gaznavi, In his crusade of loot and destruction, had invaded India seventeen times without ever meeting any resistance worth the name. When the Guru met the Yogis, they asked him :

‘ਫਿਰ ਪੁਛਣ ਸਿਧ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਮਾਤ ਲੋਕ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਆ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ’ ।

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ

‘The Yogis asked Guru Nanak how the mother country was doing’ ?

Var Bhai Gurdas.

The Guru’s reply, as described by Bhai Gurdas again, speaks volumes and is the truest testimony to the actual state of affairs, obtaining then :

‘ਬਾਬੇ ਕਹਿਆ ਨਾਥ ਜੀ ਸਚ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਕੂੜ ਅੰਧਾਰਾ’ ॥

‘The holy Guru tells the Yogis that the Moon of truth hath fled and there is utter darkness’. The same Bhai Gurdas describes the whole situation in a few pithy words, thus :

‘ਪਾਪੇ ਦਾ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ’ ॥

i.e. ‘The sin reigneth supreme’.

The gist of all these different narratives on the subject, is that men’s ideas and aspirations were the lowest, then. Men, fascinated by Maya, were lost in wilderness. Goodness had no longer any attraction for them. They were burning themselves in egotistic pursuits and had no respect for each other. Kings were unjust and nobles were butchers and they held knives to men’s throats, to serve their own ends. Life, property and honour were unsafe. Marriage parties were waylaid and brides forcibly taken away and sold. The most despicable thing about it was that people suffered every

humiliation without a murmur or a protest and blamed their fate for their miserable plight, Peace had fled from the smiling earth, which seemed filled with tearful eyes of the afflicted humanity. In fact, all seemed lost for the time being and the sense of frustration and general depression prevailed everywhere.

Guru Nanak had before him this terrible picture when he appeared on the Indian scene. He and his successors were called upon to save their countrymen not only from the political bondage of cruel tyrants but also free men's souls, demoralised to an unimaginable extent. It seemed clear that unless political freedom for the people were won, it was difficult to rid society of all the grave disabilities and exploitation, they suffered from. But they had no armies to march them into the field of battle. Also there could be no success in that direction without political unity or coherence which was not possible among men in a land divided in a hundred ways, subjugated by ruthless foreign powers and held firmly by the Brahmanical sway over their minds. Yet the Gurus did not lose heart. They set about awakening, indoctrinating, educating and planting the seeds of revolution in the people's hearts. Men had to be freed first from the social and religious tyrannies and from every mental slavishness. They had first to learn to throw off this kind of slavery before they could successfully deal with the political kind of slavery, imposed from above. They must learn to come to grips with the formidable evil that lay in their own hearts, before they could deal with the political bondage, in an effective manner. The Gurus were firm advocates of social justice. Discrimination in the name of caste, race, religion must be resisted first, as it hurt

the price of those discriminated against. Each man possessed a sacred soul that should not brook suppression. Reverence for human personality must be restored first, Men's minds must be awakened against all inequalities that unfortunately had also the authority of the past and the force of custom to support them. But human nature could not be changed over night. The work of awakening and steeling people's minds, had to be carried on for many generations. They had to learn that sin and suffering were the result of men's own shortcomings and came to those who forgot God. They should first defy death, throw off fear from their hearts and resist evil wherever it existed. They should rise above the things transitory and look ahead. They should know that the seat in heaven could not be had through the intervention of the Brahmin but through a life of love, truth and service. In this way, the Sikh Gurus carried on crusade against evil in social and other spheres for a long time with a view to produce real and effective awakening in the minds of men,

It was then the period of Mughal domination which, except for the rule of Akbar, had become a curse for the land. Akbar's successor, his son, Jahangir, was himself basically cruel and soulless tyrant. Many stories are told of his stone-hearted and barbarous acts. Here are a few of them :

Hundred robbers were once produced before him in chains. He ordered, without even the ceremony of a trial, that they should be executed. Their chief was to be torn into pieces by dogs employed for the purpose. The hands and the feet of the rest were tied together and their necks were cut by the sword and yet not quite

through and then their naked and blood stained bodies were left in the streets to corrupt. For very minor offences people were ordered to be hanged, beheaded, torn by dogs, destroyed by elephants, bitten by serpents and whipped. All executions were done in market places so as to serve as deterrents. Jahangir's own son, Khusro, was treated most cruelly and was ordered into confinement. One of his companions was sewed up in a raw hide of an ox and the other in that of an ass. Both of them were led on asses about the town with their faces towards the tail. The hides contracted, resulting in their suffocation. Two rows of stakes were fixed on the ground upon which the other rebels were impaled alive and Khusro, mounted on an elephant, was passed through them to see for himself the plight of his men.

Guru Arjan, the embodiment of love and non-violence was, in this hopeless situation, forced to think in terms of violence and to urge on his successor to prepare for the struggle that seemed to him as inevitable. His forebodings came true. He himself was tortured to death in the most in-human way and after him, his son, Guru Hargobind, was arrested, deported to Gwalior and imprisoned in the fort there for many years, without any semblance of justice, without even a trial, so that the demand for violent resistance was inevitable.

We are now coming straight to the period of Aurangzeb. He was Jahangir's grandson but he surpassed him in bigotry and consequent cruelty, in the name of religion. Many of his cruel deeds are heart-breaking, although he prayed five times a day and was considered by his co-religionists as an ideal Muslim. He was really an evil

genius. He imprisoned his father, killed his elder brother, Dara Shikoh, and younger brother, Murad, and made the way safe for a throne for himself. Dara was seated on an elephant along with his son, fourteen years old. His corpse, hacked to pieces, was placed on an elephant and paraded through the bazars for people to see and learn a lesson. The wily emperor duped the Muslims by telling them that Dara was a heretic sufi and so merited that kind of treatment. Many Muslims were indignant over this barbarous act but he tricked the Ulemas to believe that he was the true defender of Islam. In this way, he ultimately succeeded in securing the support of his co-religionists. He began his reign by a crusade against non-Muslims. He was able to please the fanatical Muslims through assuring them that he would exterminate the idolatrous Hindus. First, idol worship was made a crime. Hindu temples were destroyed, cartloads of idols were removed from there and then mosques were built in their places. In fact, conversions and desecrations of temples were an ordinary routine with the Mughal emperors, as is confirmed by Bhai Gurdas, in his Var, thus :

‘ਠਾਕਰ ਦੁਆਰੇ ਢਾਹਿ ਕੇ ਤਿਹ ਥੋੜੀ ਮਾਸੀਤ ਉਸਾਰਾ’ ।

‘Hindu temples were destroyed and mosques were built in their places’.

The homicidal treatment of his brothers, the cold blooded murder of many liberal minded Muslims, the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur and the bricking alive of the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh are some of the instances to show quite clearly how soulless he was. His bigotry and fanaticism that knew no bounds,

hed become proverbial. He did not spare any forms of torture in bringing about conversions. Hindus were required to pay a tax for being allowed to stay in the Muslim State and this was in addition to other taxes like the pilgrimage tax, the special tax (Jazia) and the Kharaj (a tax on land). Prohibitions to ride, wear rich clothes, erect new temples, celebrate festivals, and study sacred Books, were some of the disabilities they suffered from. Restrictions in the matter of dress, diet or use of conveyances, were imposed. They were a subject race and so must carry marks on the forehead to announce their inferior status. The converts to Islam were afforded economic facilities and concessions in taxes, as a reward for accepting the State religion. The low caste Hindus accepted conversions readily as an escape from the social tyranny of the so-called high caste Hindus. What a pity, that the Hindus, as a community, felt no remorse at the desertions of their coreligionists ! They foolishly believed that the desertions were in the interests of Hindu Dharma, as the impure element in it would be got rid of, without any special effort.

The above illustrations are quite sufficient to give the image of men who had ruled the destiny of the land for centuries. Guru Nanak, as we have seen above, called them dogs and tigers, as there was almost nothing human left in them, But what was to be done ? The cardinal principle of life which the Gurus had always preached was that men of God should suffer without inflicting sufferings on others. Love and non-violence, they taught, were forces that produced real inner strength. These were not intended to be understood as mere matters of policy which could

change from time to time, but were based on ideals held dearer than life. When difficulties came in the way of their application, it was time for a test of faith in them, for, faith in the efficacy of a truth could be proved only by facing difficulties and sticking to truth, in spite of those difficulties. Nonviolence and the path of suffering had been accepted as powerful instruments that might ordinarily be safely undertaken, to produce a change of heart in the evil person. These had, therefore, been tried to the utmost extent with the sacrifice, first, of Guru Arjan Dev and then, of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the purest persons that ever lived, the second of them falling at the hands of this same Aurangzeb. Yet even these sacrifices had not succeeded in bringing about any change of heart. This, however, was not the fault of non-violence, as such. Who had ever succeeded non-violently with a wolf or with a mad dog? These human brutes were even more difficult to deal with, non-violently, than the actual wolf or the tiger. They were soulless brutes, enjoyed unlimited power and were backed by people who were madly fanatic about their so-called religion and believed that any killings and sufferings inflicted on the 'infidels' were the surest way to win paradise. They derived immense satisfaction from the belief that all these atrocities were necessary for the glory and advancement of Islam. So, in this case it was not a question merely of changing the heart of this or that person but of the whole people nourished on the belief that killing the 'infidels' was a meritorious act, having behind it the sanction of God and Islam. These human brutes, that ruled the destiny of men, had a further limitation that they could not go against the wishes of their

co-religionists, even if they ever entertained any human impulse, In this situation. it was the right time when human nature felt perfectly justified in meeting one wrong with another. In fact, in the context of the circumstances of the time, it was not a wrong but a duty. Methods of appeal, persuasion and representation, had failed. In those cruel times constitutional agitations had neither meaning nor were they possible for, there was no constitution, and agitations could be ruthlessly crushed by the all-powerful and soulless despots. Also, there was, then, no public or world opinion. as we come to have today, to restrain evil doers. Thus, it had become quite clear that there was no hope to live a life of honour, dignity and self-respect. except through the arbitrament of arms even though it implied death and destruction in the land. The sensitiveness of the Guru's thinking over the state in which the nation then was and his anxiety to save it from effacement while there was still time to act, were wholly justified. It was not a sensible doctrine that whatever the circumstances and conditions in which people lived violent resistance must always be es-chewed. If, for instance, a ferocious tiger were to run amuck in a herd of cattle, what was to be done? And if the tiger were in the human form, how was the situation to be met? True, the base of Sikhism had its roots in the philosophy of love, truth and nonviolence. But it was clear that an exception had to be made in the larger interests of humanity. How could a person maintain his own purity in the face of suffering inflicted on society by wicked men? The Sikh Gurus' non-violence could not dictate surrender to evil and brute force. Like good doctors. they realised that a poisoned

limb had to be amputated to save the whole body. When cries of suffering humanity were heard everywhere, Guru Tegh Bahadur was perfecting himself to meet the great challenge, for, the greater the challenge, the greater was the need of sacrifice of a man, regarded by the people as perfect in every way. There could be no greater apostle and embodiment of truth, love and non-violence than he was and yet knowing the situation as he did, he had left instructions for his son, Guru Gobind Singh, to get in readiness for the coming struggle. Of course, the sword was not to be struck in hatred or anger nor for gains of territories or Raj, nor for plunder or acquisition, It was to be a shield against brutish barbarity that had no parallel in human history. It was to provide rejuvenation to the meek, the down-trodden and the mentally sick people. After the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, a wave of holy indignation was produced in the land and if it had not found an outlet in the form of a resolve to extirpate evil by other forms of resistance, it would have shaken faith of the people in the efficacy of truth, non-violence and love, as means to reform society and would have caused demoralisation and frustration to an enormous extent. Non-violence had failed, as it was bound to, to produce change of heart in the brutes. True, the concept of non-violence was highly noble yet it was not to be toyed with or made a fetish of, in dealing with exceptionally difficult life problems. The demands of the highest idealism should have to be reconciled with the requirements of practical exigencies of daily life. The philosophy of life could not be based merely on an abstract principle or on some metaphysical unreality, ignoring altogether the living reality.

Whoever did it paid heavily and was forced, sooner or later, into the throes of agonising re-appraisal of that philosophy. Man being what he was today, discrimination had to be exercised as to where duty lay. The imperfections of society could not admit of the practice of non-violence in all circumstances. That would have to wait till minds were disarmed and hearts had ceased to emit anger and hate. The police and the military could not be dispensed with, if law and order were to be maintained. These were the compulsions and limitations of society, due to its own imperfections. Even in highly advanced societies occasions could arise where exceptions in the exercise of non-violence was an imperative duty. If, for instance, a scoundrel were to come to a house with a sword in hand either to kill or to commit rape or even to steal and if the owner could baulk his evil designs through the use of force alone, was it right that he should close his eyes and remain unconcerned? So long as human beings had not learnt to lead a peaceful and moral life, according to the dictates of religion, virtuous people could not allow rascals to destroy all that man had built up. Self-protection or the protection of the weak, was also a duty which might come in conflict with the principle of non-violence and on some rare occasions might become even a higher duty. Ordinary rules of morality were not sufficient to cover all situations and therefore exceptions had to be made in special circumstances. Realities of life could not be ignored altogether.

As in the case of non-violence, so also in respect of truth, exceptions could not be always avoided. Let us examine this statement more closely. Suppose a person

saw some one escaping from robbers and hiding in a safe place, close by, and further that the robbers, in hot pursuit of the escaper, stood up with their naked sword before this person, requiring him to disclose the escaper's whereabouts. Should he speak the truth or save a life? where did duty direct, in such a situation? Was truth to be confined to the word of the mouth only, and had nothing to do with the conduct?

Again, we might suppose that food could not be had for labour or for charity or even for money, because of, say, general famine. If, in this situation, a person saved his life by stealing a few morsels from one who had hoarded stocks for personal gains, should he be considered a criminal? If truth and non-violence were accepted with absolute rigidity, the world would not be safe from rascals and scoundrels. Idealism should not be allowed to become a mockery. Had not some of the protagonists of non-violence made an absurd fetish of the same? They would go to the length of keeping their noses and mouths covered so as to avoid injuring micro-organisms, without realising that the whole atmosphere was filled with them and there was no escape?

Fortunately for society, so many far-sighted men of God, with a realistic outlook on life, had not recommended non-violence in all situations of life or approved all forms of it. For instance, how did Rama, Krishna and other men of God, express themselves on the subject, under our consideration here? We have before us the epic of Mahabharata that has left a practical lesson for people to study with open eyes. Arjuna was perplexed with doubt—torn between the desire to

do his duty and the love of some of his relatives & associates who stood in the ranks of the enemy. He wanted light as to whether it was right to kill or get killed in a devastating war, involving his own kith and kin. Shri Krishna, then, resolved his doubts by advising him, thus :

“ਅਪਨਾ ਧਰਮ ਦੇਖ ਕਰ ਭੀ ਮਤ ਹੋਵੋ ਤੁਮ ਕੰਪਤ ਹੋ ਪਾਰਥ ॥ ਨਹੀਂ
ਸ਼ੋਅ ਕਛ ਭੀ ਖਤਰੀ ਕੇ ਲੀਏ ਜੁਧ ਕੇ ਸਿਵਾ ਯਥਾਰਥ ॥ ਖੁਲਾ ਤੁਮਾਰੇ
ਲੀਏ ਵੀਰ ਵਰ ਸੁਅਰਗ ਯਿਹ ਅਪਨੇ ਆਪ ॥ ਸੁਖ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਖਤ੍ਰੀ
ਹੀ ਪਾਤੇ ਐਸਾ ਯੁਧ ਅਪਾਪ” ॥

‘Even knowing thy own duty, thou shouldst not waver, for, there is nothing more welcome to a Khatri than a righteous war. Happy is the Khatri, Parath, who findeth such a war, offered unsought, as an open door to Heaven’.

Shri Krishna had further asserted that if Arjana still faltered, he would be incurring a sin, for, it would mean shirking duty. And he was wholly right. Could a country, a nation, defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity with the non-violent strength of a few, without first awakening the whole nation ? And was it possible in all circumstances and of all times ?

Guru Gobind Singh did believe intensely in the philosophy of love. He knew quite well that war and violence were evils and should not, as a rule, be encouraged among people. Were not mobs everywhere difficult to control ? Were they not bereft of reason, so as to lose sense of proportion easily ? They would not really be mobs if their actions were guided by reason. A crowd was often a multiple man, descended to the

level of a beast, to destroy everything that came its way. Also, violence solved no problems and, in fact, it created more of them than it solved, unless the struggle was not only for a good and great cause but was also conducted by a fully qualified person, who would not let moral standards lowered for petty gains. Men had generally a latent violence in their make-up, expressing itself in various forms and having a way to perpetuate itself, so that they could degrade themselves to the level of the brutes. This the Guru knew but the sort of moral and spiritual degradation of the whole nation, caused primarily by the political domination of brutes, was a greater evil and the choice had ultimately to be made. Mad dogs of the human variety had to be shot, as a painful duty, yet care had to be taken that in the heat of violence, the needs of the spirit were not smothered. Therefore, the Guru, who was to fight not only against the colossal might of Mughal domination, entrenched securely in its place, but also against vested interest of all sorts, including the feudal Hill Chiefs, had continued to speak to his people, thus :

‘ਸਾਚ ਕਹਉ ਸੁਣ ਲਿਉ ਸਭੈ ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ’ ॥

ਸੁਧਾ ਸਵੈਯੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Hear ye all, I tell the truth that those who love, meet the Lord’,

Guru Gobind Singh in a Swaiyya.

His Bani speaks of love and truth with the same force, zest and earnestness as that of Guru Nanak and so, even in the midst of battles, the sense of human values was not allowed to be dimmed. For instance, a Sikh, Bhai Ghanayya, continued, during the Anandpur seige, to serve water to the wounded soldiers of

both sides with perfect impartiality. Some Sikhs came to know of it. They complained to the Guru against what appeared to them as an unpatriotic act. Bhai Ghanayya was sent for to explain his conduct. He replied that he had learnt from the Guru to look at all men as brothers. The Guru was much pleased and complimented him for what he was doing.

The rules of chivalry in the course of war were to be duly observed. The Sikhs had orders not to pursue the running enemy nor to take an undue advantage of the opponent's hard luck or of any mischance that might have befallen him. Once, during the retreat of the Hill Rajas from Auandpur, some Sikhs, flushed with victory, pursued the retreating army to avenge themselves. The Guru was much offended and returned to the city, declaring that he had broken with them. Later, they craved forgiveness and assured him that his orders in that respect would, in future, be implicitly obeyed.

The acts of valour and bravery, performed even by the opponents, were appreciated with the greatest relish. Here are the Guru's own words of appreciation as given in Bachittar Natak regarding the heroism of an opponent, Hari Chand !

“ਹਰੀ ਚੰਦ ਕ੍ਰੁਪੰ ॥ ਹਨੇ ਸੂਰ ਸੁਧੇ ॥ ਭਲੇ ਬਾਣ ਬਾਹੇ ॥ ਬਡੇ ਸੈਨ
ਗਾਹੇ ॥”

“Hari Chand was angered and killed many brave warriors of our side. He struck splendid arrows and rushed through large armies’.

The Guru was himself the embodiment of truth, love, humility, forgiveness and forbearance, in spite of the kind of work he was doing. Deliverance from the

tyranny of self, charity and forgiveness towards detractors and opponents and the spirit of optimism, had run in his teachings. It is true, the evil had to be resisted and uprooted, yet the sword was never to be struck in a spirit of revenga or in anger or hatred. The weak were to be defended against oppression and tyranny, without entertaining any aggressive intentions. Since the use of force was liable to brutalise and yet had to be permitted, as a last weapon, care was invariably taken that the sense of the higher principles of life did not get clouded. So, the Guru kept his head cool, throughout the operations of war and never departed from the path of truth and love. He had accepted armed resistance as a last resort, as one would take a bitter pill to save one's life. In his letter (Zafarnama) to Aurangzeb, he had particularly pointed out that he was not at all enamoured of conflict and had accepted it as a painful necessity, other remedies having failed'.

‘ਚੁ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਰ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸਤ ॥ ਹਲਾਲਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ
ਬਸਮਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਦਸਤ’ ॥

‘When the affairs were past other remedies, then, as a last resort it was quite justified to unsheathe the sword.’ In an earlier letter to the same emperor, written from Machhiwara, he had spoken most feelingly. He said, war should be brought to an end, as it meant so much suffering and privations to the people. The letter contained a sporting offer also—the original version, in Persian, of the offer will be given in a later chapter. Here we give only its gist; ‘Let the armies stand apart at a distance of 3 miles. You come with two other warriors and I come alone. Let us settle the issue in a combat,

straight between ourselves. Why should God's creation be destroyed simply to serve one man's ends? You are this one man, brought up in luxuries and know not the sufferings of war'. These lines reveal the bleeding heart behind war operations. Yet, war had to be fought and men's souls also had to be saved. So, in the midst of terrible sufferings that war had engendered, he would not yield to lower impulses. He would never avenge himself on the fleeing army and would never occupy an inch of territory for consolidation of personal power. His was a war of righteousness and so he would not excuse the lapses of his own men. Diwan Nand Chand, one of his best generals, was punished suitably when he misbehaved. Love for his people did not blind him to their blemishes. Victory or defeat did not matter to him. He was actually defeated many times in the material sense. He had lost his all—father, sons, friends, trusted Sikhs and, in fact, all that he held dear. Yet his spirit remained unconquered, for he was not fighting for worldly gains. For him, the criterion of spirituality was not worldly success. He wrote to Aurangzeb that he had won against the tyrant because the fire he had lit up had become a mighty flame, that would not be extinguished. His war was a holy crusade and therefore had its appeal for good men among both Hindus and Muslims, in an equal measure. It was not directed against any people or faith, as such but against injustice, tyranny and intolerance. The task before him was enormous. He had to restore honour and self-respect to the people and raise them from a state of utter prostration to a level where they should be able to change the current of history. It meant years of preparation and training, to harden them for a

sustained resistance. They had to be taught that life of the spirit was more valuable than mere physical existence. They had to learn manly virtues of bravery, courage and self-reliance. He set out, along with his fifty two court poets of scholarship and learning, in the task of preparation. War-like deeds of Rama, Krishna and Kali were rendered from Sanskrit into Hindi and held up before the people to be emulated as the heroic deeds of their ancestors. In a short time, they were so instilled with patriotic fervour that even those who had never handled the sword, became indomitable heroes. Their bravery in the face of danger became proverbial. No superiority of numbers could make their hearts quail. No one could measure sword with them in the field of battle and they could dare anything unflinchingly. They had, under the Guru's guidance, made essential preparations to build their souls and with it came tenacity of purpose and an undaunted spirit that welcomed suffering as a means for salvation. They were ever conscious of the righteousness of their cause and therefore could sing most joyfully, thus :

ਦੇ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਟਰਉ ॥ ਨ
ਡਰਉ ਅਰ ਸਿਉ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰਉ ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰ ਅਪਨੀ ਜੀਤ
ਕਰਉ ॥ ਅਰ ਸਿਖ ਹਉ ਅਪਨੇ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਕੋ ਯਿਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਹੈ ਤਉ
ਗੁਣ ਉਚਰਉ ॥ ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਬਨੇ ਅਤ ਹੀ ਰਣ
ਮਹਿ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰਉ ॥” ਚੰਡੀ ਚਰਿਤ੍ਰ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

“O Lord, Give me Thy Blessings that I may not be deterred from meritorious deeds, that I may not be afraid of the adversary, when I go out to fight and that I may win through faith, my inner conscience remaining

as my guide. I crave that I may ever sing Thy praises and when the last moment comes, I may fall fighting heroically in the battlefield'.

Epilogue to Chandi Charitar by Guru Gobind Singh.

Wonderful was the transformation the Guru had wrought in his people. They fought by his side but with human dignity that produced compassion in their hearts, even for the enemy. It is true, they had to be stern in dealing with wickedness, yet they retained humility, softness and other essential human qualities.

The Sikhs were never to consider war as an end in itself. Bhai Nand Lal offered for enlistment in the army but the Guru knew, he was better fitted for another kind of work and so presented him a pen to be wielded in the service of the Lord. On the other hand, Saiyyad Khan, a warrior, who had lost his humanity, was told to throw off the sword that had brutalised him and take to the love of God. Yet, he offered his own sword to Banda Bairagi, so that he could get out of his little den, where he was practising spiritual negativism, and learn to serve the afflicted mankind. He wanted him to come down to the physical plane of action and live life in its fulness, as mere meditation and worship divorced from the life of active service would not make him spiritual. In the field of service, too, he assigned to his people tasks and duties in terms of the needs of the times and of the natural capabilities of the persons concerned. It should be remembered that he was engaged in actual warfare for about ten years. The rest of his time was occupied in creating revolution in the hearts of men, through the necessary literature prepared by himself and by some of the

best scholars the country could give him. Intellectual and moral development of his people could be ignored only at a very heavy cost to themselves. Whenever he felt free from warfare, he settled down to produce more and more literature. It is true, he was called upon to break the might of a brutal power but the process of breaking synchronised with creating and making.

Violence was regarded, through out as something abominable, it caused death of millions and disease to many. Above everything else, it caused degradation of human values. Guru Hargobind was the first to unsheath the sword, as a last weapon, yet he had left instructions for his successor that the sword was not to be unsheathed, whatever the provocation. And these instructions were so faithfully carried out by the latter that even when his own family members were encircled by the enemy, no force was used to save them. This really was the approach of the Gurus to violence, as such.

In examining different aspects of Sikh religion, the thing that stands out conspicuously is that its approach to life is realistic. It is the most practical religion and believes that the world in which we find ourselves and the problems that confront us, should be faced heroically but realistically. A philosophy of negativism is not countenanced by it at all. It is true that renunciation, humility, forgiveness, self-denial, compassion, non-violence and forbearance are good and great things but the question to be faced is as to what was to be done if these good and great things came in conflict with other good and great things, that were equally valuable for human advancement. Why should

a man not have self-respect and independence in an equal measure and why should he be deprived of an honoured existence that came through having honourable living conditions ? Why should renunciation be incompatible with the life of a self-respecting householder and why should it be carried so far as to connote withdrawal from the world itself ? Why run away from the battle of life, like a coward ? All that, would be something negative and a confession of failure. Real renunciation should mean becoming a part of the world and yet holding aloof in mind from its allurements. That was something great and positive. All aspects of human personality should be rationalised so that the development of man as a whole was not lopsided, We might explain this statement.

In India, China, Greece and the Japan of Budha, it was the negative view which had come to be accepted in practice, with the result that cutting away from the affairs of the world was favoured as a religious duty. This philosophy tended to devitalise people and made them helpless and impotent before the might of the despots. India, as we now know, had suffered grievously from this philosophy and remained in subjugation for centuries. The Gurus wanted to pull people out of the mire into which they had fallen and give them power and self-respect. But it was not the sort of power which the German philosopher Nietzsche would like the Germans to possess. His philosophy was really a reaction to the philosophy of negativism of the above kind. Yet, it is a pity that his mind did not work in a balanced way. This is what he had said, in effect : Life was a struggle for existence in which only the fittest survived. This meant that strength was the

ultimate virtue and weakness the only fault. In this battle of life what men needed was not goodness but strength, not humility but pride, not altruism but resolute intelligence. Equality and democracy were against the grain of selection and survival, therefore geniuses and not masses could be the goal of evolution. Power and not justice should be extolled as the arbiter of differences, Greed, envy and even hatred were indispensable items in the process of struggle, selection and survival. Nietzsche went on so far as to say that if evil were not good, it should have disappeared. Man must beware of being too good. He must rather become better and more evil. The goal of human effort should be not the elevation of all but the development of finer and stronger individuals, etc., etc.

Now clearly Nietzsche had carried his philosophy to the other extreme and therefore did not propound something sound. The Sikh Gurus avoided both extremes and in that lay the justification for the philosophy of the use of sword, employed in extreme situations. The sword was to become a symbol of power, self-respect, dignity and a shield for self-defence and for the protection of the weak and the oppressed. Non-violence and love must remain the rule, while the sword had its justification only in exceptional cases, when the cause was just and great, and when other remedies had been tried without yielding results. It could, thus, be seen that the Sikh Kirpan was never intended as a symbol of violence but of resistance to an evil of a formidable kind, when other ways to overcome evil had been tried without producing results. Since it was to become a shield for the protection of Dharma, which included non-violence, truth and love, it should be considered

as their ally and not as opposed to them, in any way.

Before we close this chapter we have a word to say about the Guru's war with the Hill Rajas (Rajput chiefs of the Shivalik Hills). How was it, men wonder, that the Rajas who were Hindus, should engage the Guru in so many battles when they should have known that the Guru was the champion of the down-trodden, the Hindus being then among them, most prominently? But the issue is easy to understand when we remember that these Rajas were Hindus only in name. Although they professed faith in the ancient religion of the Vedas and Shastras, they really looked to their own narrow and selfish interests. True, the Hindu masses had suffered enormously from the persecution of the Muslim rulers but this was not a matter of much concern to them. They did not have a keen patriotic sense, nor a real love for the Hindu Dharma. Power, wealth, land and privileges were the only objective before them and these, they thought, could be retained only through the favour of the rulers. Aurangzeb also knew quite well that these feudal chiefs were interested only in themselves and so he and his deputies willingly employed them as their tools to suppress the movement started by the Guru. The emperor himself was, for years, engaged in Deccan to deal with rebellions there and it suited him admirably to let the Rajas engage the Guru in suppressing the popular and progressive movements he had started, with the assurance, expressed or tacit that he would ever be on their side in rendering them military or economic assistance. So, there was a sort of understanding between the rulers and the Rajas that they were each other's allies, provided the Rajas continued to be loyal to the emperor.

The Rajas constantly feared the loss of court favour, which ultimately meant the loss of power and privileges they enjoyed and so they were ever keen to prove their loyalty by siding with the government of the day, against every popular upsurge. They were thus a part of the despotic and reactionary rule, since their own interests lay in the continuation of that rule. The Guru, on the other hand, stood against reaction in every field, whether religious, or political or social. He was against exploitation of masses in every form and was thus the enemy of both the Rajas and the Mughal rulers. He had to fight against evil in whatever form it existed. Since the Hindu Rajas were entrenched in the stronghold of feudalism and the emperor possessed unlimited political and military power, the task before him, was enormously difficult, yet he had no choice but to face the situation as it was. The war with the Hill Rajas should, therefore, be looked in perspective. There could be no positive basis of an alliance with them, the fact that always came out prominently whenever an attempt was made to give concrete shape to unity. It was not possible to make a permanent alliance with one kind of tyranny under the pretext of fighting another kind of tyranny. So, the Guru had to fight both of them.

CHAPTER III

Compulsions of war.

"ਦੀਸਿ ਆਵਤ ਹੈ ਬਹੁਤ ਭੀਹਾਲਾ ॥ ਸਗਲ ਚਰਨ ਕੀ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ
ਰਾਲਾ" ॥ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

'In outward appearance I seem terrible to look upon, yet my mind is the dust of every body's feet.'

Guru Arjan in Asa.

Before we start to narrate the Guru's life history, it seems necessary to remind the reader, once again, that in assessing the work, the achievements and the personality of the Guru, there is, in his case, the greatest danger of an under-estimation. His actions in dealing with them are apt to cause misunderstandings, It is true, scientific knowledge has banished darkness to a great extent and men do not look upon religious theories and practices strictly in the same way as their ancestors did. But still there are persons accustomed to think in the conventional way and in old ruts. They remain narrow minded and cannot see things in perspective. they fail to realise that war conditions impose limitations which no man, however great, can ignore. The

saying, 'all is fair in love and war' is, without doubt, an extravagant exaggeration yet it cannot be denied that war creates problems that need to be met realistically by compromising peace ideals. All the same, it is necessary to save the soul of people from damnation, in consequence of several unhealthy tendencies that are bound to develop in an armed conflict. Only an exceptionally high minded person can do it by handling situations with a cool head. Such a person has to keep himself constantly reminded of the irrational dimensions which war mentality leads to, in brutalising men. War is an evil after all, though, sometimes, a necessary evil and may not be avoided in extreme situations, as we had examined it in the previous chapter.

The aim of the present chapter is to point out some of the compulsions of war that could not be escaped, even by the mighty Guru. Rather, these had to be met realistically, coming down to the earth. The idealistic principles had to undergo limitations to accommodate hard facts of life. It is undeniably true that the Guru was sweet, humble and large hearted. Yet, he could not afford to be too soft with villains and tyrants of the worst kind. The very quality of sweet reasonableness which in peace time is an asset, may become a liability at a time when purposeful decisions and not hesitant reactions are the need of the hour. Caution may be all right in peace times but in war it must not be allowed to take the form of inaction. The sins of inertia, passivity and indifference should not be considered as negligible, particularly in a military leader. Hesitation to act is the worst quality in such a leader. Resort to violence was a painful necessity. It had many evil aspects and the Guru knew

it. Yet, once he had taken a decision, as demanded by the exigencies of the times, he had to apply drastic remedies in the curbing of evil doers. He could not afford to blow hot and cold at the same time. That would be mere sentimentality, unrelated to the facts of the situation. Of course, it is given to only a few to act firmly, constantly and consistently and yet retain all essential human qualities. War is a rough and tumble game. Strength commands respect from unscrupulous foes and bad men for, they are cowards at heart. Guru Nanak says :

‘ਮੂਰਖ ਗੰਢੁ ਪਵੈ ਮੁਹਿ ਮਾਰ’ ॥

ਮਾਂਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘The fool is often mended by being struck on the face’.

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh,

Is is on account of this that war imposes another condition, the suitability of the leader. There is an interesting dialogue between the Guru and Jait Ram, a Mahant at the shrine of faqir Dadu, in Narafnpur. The Mahant had quoted the following lines of the faqir :

‘ਦਾਦੂ ਦਾਵਾ ਦੂਰ ਕਰ ਬਿਨ ਦਾਹਵੇ ਦਿਨ ਕਟ ॥

ਕੇਤੀ ਸੌਦਾ ਕਰ ਗਈ ਏਸ ਪਸਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਹਟ’ ॥

‘O Dadu, surrender thy claims over all worldly things and pass thy days without any claims. How many have left this world trading at the grocer’s shop (refers to men in worldly entanglements, making worldly claims) !

Now, the view contained in these lines was not different from the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. We give here a line from the Holy Guru Granth Sahib itself, speaking almost the language of Dadu :

“ਕਬੀਰ ਦਾਵੈ ਦਾਝਨੁ ਹੋਤ ਹੈ ਨਿਰਦਾਵੈ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਸੈਕ ॥ ਜੋ ਜਨੁ
ਨਿਰਦਾਵੈ ਰਹੈ ਸੋ ਗਨੈ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੁ ਸੋ ਚੰਕ” ॥ ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ

“Kabir, one engrossed in worldly claims burneth oneself—But for one who maketh no claim, the king is as much worth as the beggar”. Shalok of Kabir

The Guru fully subscribed to this view but he was conscious all along of the difficult role he was called upon to play, by providence, and so he told the Mahant, in a more or less jocular vein, that the lines quoted from Dadu were all right for normal conditions. But they needed to be suitably modified in the context of the changed circumstances. Here is the reply :

“ਦਾਦੂ ਦਾਵਾ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਨ ਲਈਏ ਲੁੱਟ ॥ ਇਕੋ ਰਹਸੀ ਖਾਲਸਾ
ਹੋਰ ਮਰੇਸੀ ਹੁਟ” ॥

“O Dadu, assert thy claim forcefully, in the world and (if need be) plunder the (wicked) enemy (i.e. whoever doeth evil extirpate him). The Khalsas (the emancipated ones) alone shall remain and all others shall perish”.

The Mahant read out another line of Dadu, thus :

“ਦਾਦੂ ਸਮਾਂ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੇ ਕਲਿ ਕਾ ਕੀਜੈ ਭਾਉ ॥ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਮਾਰੇ ਢੀਮ
ਈਟ ਲੀਜੈ ਸੀਸ ਚੜਾਇ” ॥

“G Dadu, if anyone throws a clod or a brick on thee, lift it over thy head. That is what the kal Age demands (i.e. men in this Age have lost their humanity and so they have to be put up with)”.

The lines represented the philosophy of doing good, in return for evil. It was the philosophy of love, humility and forbearance. The same was accepted as the life anchor, for spiritual development, by the Sikh

Gurus also, as is indicated in these line :

“ਜੋ ਤੈ ਮਾਰਨਿ ਮੁਕੀਆ ਤਿਨਾ ਨ ਮਾਰਹਿ ਘੁੰਮਿ ॥ ਆਪਨੜੈ ਘਰਿ
ਜਾਈਐ ਪੈਰ ਤਿਨਾ ਦੇ ਚੁੰਮਿ ॥” ਸਲੋਕ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ ॥

“O Farid, they who give thee blows, meet them not with blows. On the contrary, go home quietly, kissing their feet”.

Shalok of Sheikh Farid.

Yet, the Guru knew that this approach, however noble, was not strictly applicable in dealing with the brutes of his times. Defence had to be put up against them in the interest of truth, justice and righteousness. So, he replied, thus :

“ਦਾਦੂ ਸਮਾਂ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਕੈ ਕਲਿ ਕਾ ਕੀਜੈ ਭਾਉ ॥ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਮਾਰੈ ਈਟ
ਢੀਮ ਪਾਥਰ ਹਨੈ ਰਿਸਾਇ” ॥

“O Dadu, it is true that the demands of the Kal Age must be met, in keeping with the circumstances of the time (yet the times should also be looked upon in true perspective). If any one throw a clod or a brick, strike him with a stone (as tyrants deserve to be punished)”.

The amendments suggested to the Mahant had relevance to the particular times and were not intended for universal application. The slogans employed and policies formed in a particular context did not necessarily have the same meaning in another context.

(It is not out of place to point out here that the exact words of the Guru in respect of the amendments suggested by him to the Mahant have not come down to us. The lines given above are only the versification of the Guru's reply in the biographer's own language and may not have been worded quite suitably. The idea

behind them should, however, be clearly noted).

Let us stop here to examine the points of view emphasised above, through actual events in the Guru's life to understand their relative significance. They will surely help the reader to see things in true perspective and will enable him to realise that there are certain compulsions of war which are the inevitable concomitants of armed conflict and are wholly inescapable. Here are a few events that will throw some light on the subject under review :

1. The Guru had an elephant presented to him by a faithful devotee. Raja Bhim Chand wanted to have it for himself, by every means, fair or foul. First, he employed strategy. He said, the animal should be lent to him on the occasion of the marriage of his son. Now this was simply a trick employed to get the elephant from the Guru and he knew it. So he decided upon not parting with the elephant. The intentions behind the demand being evil, it was wrong to play in the hands of the deceitful Raja and in the context of the coming war. The Guru was, then, at the head of a movement started by him for the liberation of the land, from the clutches of both the imperial and the feudal dominations. If the demand had concerned his person only, he would have acted differently. But now he needed the elephant for himself for strengthening his military potential, in the interests of the cause he had espoused. He had also to create conditions in which he would command respect from the opponents and strike fear in the hearts of evil doers. If he had yielded, he would have paved the way for more demands and had also demoralised the forces of good. How could he agree

to submit to fraud, trickery, treachery and deceit. The leader with a nation behind him and engaged in a life and death struggle, must exercise courage, intelligence, determination and alertness. Therefore, the forces of evil had to be dealt with as they deserved. When he knew for certain that the Raja would, for selfish ends, pose humility like a jackal but would soon assume arrogance and bravery of a lion, he had a clear-cut attitude towards him. It is not out of place to give here his satirical denunciation of every kind of posed humility, hypocrisy and insincerity :

“ਸਿਜਦੇ ਕਰੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਤੋਪਚੀ ਕਪਟ ਭੇਸ ਪੋਸਤੀ ਅਨੇਕਤਾ ਨਿਵਾਵਤ
ਹੈ ਸੀਸ ਕੋ ॥ ਕਹਾਂ ਭਯੋ ਮਲ ਜੋ ਪੈ ਕਾਢਤ ਅਨੇਕ ਡੰਡ ਸੋ ਤੋ ਨ
ਡੰਡੋਤ ਅਸਟਾਂਗ ਅਤਿ ਥੀਸ ਕੋ ॥ ਕਹਾਂ ਭਯੋ ਰੋਗੀ ਜੋ ਪੈ ਡਾਰਯੋ ਰਹਯੋ
ਉਰਧ ਮੁਖ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਨ ਮੁੰਢ ਨਿਹੁਰਾਯੋ ਆਦਿ ਈਸ ਕੋ ॥ ਕਾਮਨਾ
ਅਧੀਨ ਸਦਾ ਦਾਮਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ ਏਕ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਕੈਸੇ ਪਾਵ
ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਕੋ ॥”

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

• Artillerymen dressed in deceptive garments as also men addicted to opium bow their heads many times. What good is it if men performed several prostrations ? Do not wrestlers, practising their exercises, do the same ? (These prostrations cannot be accepted as genuine prostrations, in service of Him (unless they come from the heart). What good is in lying with head turned low ? Do not men suffering from, say, headache, do the same ? Bowing in service of Him should always proceed from the heart. How can he who is the slave of desire or in the hold of wealth, meet the Lord of the world, without faith in Him ?

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

Holding such strong views on posed and spurious

humility, how could the Guru accept the Raja's request as something genuine ? He had to be firm with deceitful men. Fearlessness, assertiveness and tenacity, particularly in war times, were thrilling qualities in a leader of masses to keep them not only united but also above any gloomy or pessimistic trends. He must instil in them the much needed optimism to enhance their morale and provide them strength, even in defeats. His fighting forces should exude cheer, confidence, courage and steel-edged determination. Yet, sometimes, when danger appeared from more than one quarter, he had to make compromise with one of the parties, even when he knew it acted in a deceitful and sly manner. These were the compulsions that war had imposed. The strategy of war had to be kept flexible and could not be tied too rigidly to a particular doctrine or a dogma.

2. The army in Anandpur had its requirements of food for itself and grass for its horses and these could be met only from villages in the territory of Bhim Chand. Now, if essential needs too could not be met even on payment, the same had to be secured by force. Complaints were made to the Guru against his troops. But what else could be done in those terrible conditions of war ? Armies would not live without food. In a similar situation when Sikh soldiers were returning to Anandpur, after the battle of Nadaun, the villagers of Alsun refused to sell supplies to them. The Guru ordered that these be taken forcibly and payment made at the usual rates.

3. In the life and death struggle that was being waged, money was needed for so many purposes. The faithful

and devoted Sikhs had continued to serve in the army for love. But in Malwa, the Guru was compelled to introduce the system of paid service. He knew, it was a faulty arrangement and created difficulties in many ways. Firstly, he did not have enough funds and secondly it brought into service mere mercenaries who could not be depended upon and, at times, created revolt too, yet war had to be fought and won. This necessitated an experiment in paid service, though the same was abolished soon after and the volunteer force alone allowed to be maintained, as soon as it was realised that mere military adventurers and mercenaries did not produce strength. They offered services to the highest bidder and could not be depended upon. Yet the exigencies of war had necessitated measure like these and when they proved injurious to the health of the Nation they had to be abolished in the larger interests of the cause.

4. The Hill Rajas wrote to the Guru that the Anandpur belonged to them. They told him that his father was allowed to live there only if regular payment of rent continued to be made and since the same had never been made, he should quit the place forthwith, failing which he would be arrested and punished. The Guru firmly asserted that his father had purchased the land and therefore the Rajas had no claim on it. If they used force, the same would be met with force.

5. After escape from Anandpur, the Guru was in Chamkaur. A Jat Sikh refused him shelter for fear of the Mughal. The Sikh was arrested and shelter secured by force. Now it is inconceivable that the Guru would have acted as he did, in peace times. But what

could he do when the enemy was in hot pursuit of him and he had yet to make preparations for the defence that had to be put up there. He had to act quickly, firmly and effectively.

6. After escape from Chamkaur, the Guru was running for his life. In Kheri Village, two Muslims, Alfu and Gamu, recognised him. He tried to silence them by all reasonable means. But when he found they could not be brought round, both of them were put to the sword. How could he afford to be soft when the future of the whole movement was at stake and he himself was the force behind that movement?

7. The Guru was so wide awake that he could read every situation with unerring perspicacity. His mother, a good hearted lady, could, sometimes, be prevailed upon by interested people to urge on him to accept the assurances of the enemy, for a safe exit from Anandpur, offered on the condition that the blockaded city was vacated. He himself was never tricked, though sometimes he yielded to the pressure put upon him by his loving mother and his devoted followers. Events, later on, proved that he was right, yet he had to make compromise on other considerations, necessitated by war. Of course, there were other occasions when he was driven to ignore even the mother's wishes. On the representation of the masands to her, she urged on her son to desist from beating the drum in public, as that was likely to antagonise Raja Bhim Chand. Now this proposal had emerged out of fear and was too unrealistic to be countenanced. He replied firmly, though most respectfully, that times had changed and the sword had to be met with sword. How could he,

even for the sake of his mother, allow his people to be terrified? He had to employ the same people for the destruction of the forces of evil. On all similar occasions he was shrewd enough to realise that all the sufferings his people had gone through would not come to much if he yielded merely on personal considerations. Also it was the commander who had the total view before him. He was ordinarily, the best judge as to what should be done and what should not be done, in a particular situation. He had often to match his strategy by means, the tyrants would understand.

8. The Sikhs on their way to Talwandi Sabo, to pay homage to their Guru, were frequently plundered by the men of Zabardast Khan, the Viceroy of Lahore, as also by other Muslims of influence. They were not members of the regular army nor was any regular fighting going on then. What was then to be done to checkmate the assaults of the mauraunders? The Guru told his Sikhs that times had changed and they should wear arms to protect themselves. He could not be expected to entertain the niceties of law and order, when he was himself actually in revolt against the so-called established order of things. He had declared, like an honest revolutionary, that he would destroy this order.

9. Some Sanyasis came to see the Guru. They had heard that he was a spiritual leader and so, according to their own way of thinking, they had expected him to be a tyagi Sadhu, that had renounced everything. But they were surprised at what they saw. They found him dressed in the martial style and in a

dazzling kingly splendour. He had donned a turban with a plume in it to signify royalty, allowed himself to be addressed as true king, accepted presents from the faithful in the style of emperors and built up a big army. The Sanyasis further learnt that orders had gone to his Sikhs abroad that they should, in future, make offerings of arms and horses. In splendour and magnificence his durbar resembled a princely court and the Sanyasis were dumb-founded. They could not understand how a man who called himself a Guru or a faqir reconciled the creed of renunciation with a stately durbar, that he had. The Guru told them that those who had truly killed desire, could live in the midst of worldly attachments, without being csught into them. One who lived in God, could easily remain above the temptations, the worldly goods offered. He said, his Sikhs were pure, free and above the hold of Maya. On the other hand, it was quite possible that a man who had renounced the world, without subduing the self, might become an easy victim to the inducements of the things of the world. The Guru's penetrating mind had seen that the persons before him were hypocrites, despite the tall claims they were making, about their so-called freedom from worldly attachments. Their cocoa-nut bowls, the symbols of renunciation, had concealed gold coins within them. The Guru decided to draw out thase coins to expose to the world the false pretensions of the so-called Sanyasis, so that the people could know that unless the mind was freed from allurements of Maya, mere outward form of a religious garb did not matter. Burning charcoal was put on the lids of the bowls, causing the lac cementing the joints to melt and break open the

bowls. The coins came out to put the pretenders to shame.

The Sanyasis had not known the meaning of true renunciation. They did not realise that the sage before them though appearing in regal splendour and functioning like a king, was still a sage because he was not the slave but the master of his self and was motivated by high purposes. This sage firmly believed that man's highest destiny was the kingdom of the spirit. Not that the body and its needs were to be decried. No soul could flourish without proper care of the body. But that alone should not be allowed to become the be-all and the end-all of life. Yes, the Guru, in his role of a saviour, found it necessary to appear as a king, yet the contributions of the faithful Sikhs in the enhancement of the splendour of his Durbar were also not small. They loved to see their beloved Guru appear in at least as much temporal glory as the worldly kings did and so in a deep devotional spirit and as an expression of their love, they offered enormous gold and silver, so as to meet the needs of life as also enhance the prestige of their Spiritual State. yet, the Guru thought otherwise. For him, these things had their utility and meaning only in a certain context. Besides building prestige so necessary for the cause and in the peculiar circumstances which he worked in, zest for good living added to the enthusiasm of the fighters, engaged in the liberation of the land. People not fed properly and addicted to austerities, would not have the stamina for a sustained struggle. But although circumstances necessitated a regal splendour, he was completely detached

in spirit. Behind the outward splendour there was the sublimity of a divine kind, as only the Divine could have manifested Himself in him to make him what he was—a superman. He had in him the makings of many kinds of greatness. In other words, there was in him the confluence of all the components that go to throw up a great leader. On that account, it might be difficult to understand him, yet one thing was absolutely clear. In whatever form he appeared before the people, his in-most mind was ever attuned to the Supreme Spirit. He possessed the soul of a faqir. He was full of humility and considered himself as the dust of everybody's feet, even though he was called upon by providence to play the role of a general, in war. What value did the material things of the world have for a man who could make any sacrifice? True, he was not an ascetic yet he was unattached to wealth or power. He never allowed the material things to influence him or to cloud the moral and spiritual sense of even his followers. He could not tolerate that they should forget themselves in the love of money and the material things it could fetch, and lose higher values of life. He, once, caused all costly dresses to be put to the flames and the vast treasure of money, offered by the faithfuls, to be thrown in Sutlej. Thenceforward, he ordered that all Sikhs including himself should live simply. He had noticed that, of late, his Sikhs had become easy going and loved material things. They were feeding fat on the religious offerings and had forgotten the value of simple living and high thinking. He told them that unearned money had the same dissolving effect on mind as borax had on gold. Here is his satire on those who lived on offerings :

“ਆਖਨ ਮੀਚ ਰਹੈ ਬਕ ਕੀ ਜਿਮ ਲੋਗਨ ਏਕ ਪ੍ਰਪੰਚ ਦਿਖਾਯੋ ॥
 ਨਯਾਤ ਫਿਰਯੋ ਸਿਰ ਬਧਕ ਜਿਉ ਅਸ ਧਿਆਨ ਬਿਲੋਕ ਬਿੜਾਲ ਲਜਾਯੋ ॥
 ਲਾਗ ਫਿਰਯੋ ਧਨ ਆਸ ਜਿਤੈ ਤਿਤ ਲੋਕ ਗਯੋ ਪਰਲੋਕ ਗਵਾਯੋ ॥ ਸ੍ਰੀ
 ਭਗਵੰਤ ਭਜਯੋ ਨ ਅਰੇ ਜੜ ਧਾਮ ਕੇ ਕਾਮ ਕਹਾਂ ਉਰਝਾਯੋ” ॥
 ਤੇਤੀ ਸਵੈਯੇ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘They close eyes like cranes and deceive people. They go about with heads bowed downwards like those of hunters, so that even the wily cats would feel ashamed, on seeing such hypocritical postures. The more they cling to the hope of wealth, the more they lose this world and the next. O fool, why utterest not thou the Lord’s Name, and why art thou engrossed in worldly attachments ?’

Guru Gobind Singh in Teti Swaiyyas.

That, in essence, was the Guru’s approach, Yet, we might look at the matter from another point of view. Why should good and gay life be taken as necessarily the sign of moral weakness or of the breakdown of religion ? On the contrary is it not poverty, ugliness or disease that should be considered as immoral ? It is true, poverty may advance spirituality when self-imposed. But who can truthfully say that it is always better than healthful living or that mal-nutrition is in any way better than good feeding ? Simplicity cannot be the same thing as squalor or filthy living, which can only retard the advancement of spiritual civilisation and is the ugly sign of sloth, frustration and decay. To attain the liberty of the spirit, freedom from economic constraints is essential. If the things of the minds are to be pursued with ease, the minimum necessities of life must be provided, not for its own sake but in order that the human soul may achieve its dignity,

power and independence. Therefore the legitimate pursuit of wealth to satisfy one's economic needs is a perfectly natural phenomenon, if the needs of the soul are to be attended to without hindrance, and these needs may be different in different circumstances. Bhagat Kabir had said :

‘ਭੁਖੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ਯਹ ਮਾਲਾ ਅਪਨੀ ਲੀਜੈ’ ॥ ਸੋਰਠਿ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ।
‘It is not possible to offer worship with a hungry stomach. Take back, then, O Lord, this rosary of Thine’.

Kabir in Sorath.

But the thing to be always borne in mind is that along with material prosperity attention must always remain fixed on the spiritual element in human nature. It is to that human nature that every material prosperity must be subordinated.

On this subject, the occasion of Guru Hargobind's succession to Guruship has a great lesson for everybody to learn. Bhai Budha placed before the Guru a couch, a cap and a seli (a woolen cord worn round the head), as was the custom on such occasions. The Guru, in a loud voice, had declared that the couch must, in reverence, go to the Holy Granth, the cap really belonged to the anchorite and the seli should rest in the treasury, being unsuited to the conditions of the time. Instead, he should be provided a sword belt for the protection of Dharma. When the same was presented to him, he wore it on the right side. Bhai Budha thought that perhaps the Guru had missed the customary way of wearing it and tried, in vain, to change it to the left side. The Guru told him that it should be allowed to remain where it was and another should be provided for the left side. He explained that the two swords

would serve as emblems of spiritual and temporal powers. There was the need, he said, for both, one representing secular prosperity and the other spiritual health, so that both sides of human needs were met effectively. It was quite true to say that normally when a man lived well, he worked well.

There is a beautiful hymn of Guru Arjan that speaks the above language, which Guru Hargobind had employed. The hymn seems to have before it a situation in which a servant of God finds it necessary to be gaily dressed while engaged in the difficult task of liberating the nation, through the employment of violent means and yet remaining perfectly humble at heart. Here is the hymn.

“ਸਾਚਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨ ਲਾਗਾ ॥ ਲੋਗਨ ਸਿਉਂ ਮੇਰਾ ਠਾਠਾ ਬਾਗਾ ॥
 ਬਾਹਰਿ ਸੂਤੁ ਸਗਲ ਸਿਉਂ ਮਉਲਾ ॥ ਅਲਿਪਤ ਰਹਉ ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ
 ਮਹਿ ਕਉਲਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਮੁਖ ਕੀ ਬਾਤ ਸਗਲ ਸਿਉ ਕਰਤਾ ॥ ਜੀਅ
 ਸੰਗਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਪਨਾ ਧਰਤਾ ॥ ਦੀਸਿ ਆਵਤ ਹੈ ਬਹੁਤ ਭੀਹਾਲਾ ॥ ਸਗਲ
 ਚਰਨ ਕੀ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਰਾਲਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
 ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ ॥” ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

“My inmost mind is attuned to the True Name, although there is the show of a white-robed splendour, as apparent to the people (Guru Gobind Singh, for instance would express the same thing thus: I am dressed in kingly splendour and people call me true king, yet my love for the True Name is undiminished). Outwardly, I am thick with all people yet inwardly, I remain detached like lotus in water. By word of mouth I hold my talk with all, but my mind is always with the Lord. Though I seem very terrible in my outward looks, yet my mind is the dust of every body's feet (Guru Gobind Singh,

again, would put the same thing thus : Being dressed as a warrior I may seem terrible to look at but my mind is full of humility). Sayeth Nanak, this servant hath met the perfect Guru who hath shown that the One alone resideth, both within and without'.

Guru Arjan in Asa.

Here, the faith of a God's servant, in the fundamental principles of truth, non-violence, humility, love, service, compassion, forgiveness and forbearance etc. are being affirmed by him even when that servant is engaged in some terrific role. Although the servant depicted in the hymn has weapons of war on his body and appears in the dreadful outer form of a mighty warrior, he is most humble at heart—that is because he has met the true Guru who has enlightened him to view all life as one.

CHAPTER IV

The advent and early age.

‘ਵਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ ਮਰਦ ਅਗੰਮਤਾ ਵਰਿਆਮ ਅਕੇਲਾ’ ॥

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ (ਦੂਜਾ) ।

“The one, incomprehensible in spirit, uniquely brave and of indomitable courage and strength, was made manifest’.

Var of Bhai Gurdas (the second).

Guru Gobind Singh was born in Patna on Friday, 13th Pokh, in 1723 Sambat. His father, Guru Tegh Bahadur was; then, in Assam with Raja Bishan Singh, and was moving about in remote parts of the country visiting holy places and spreading his mission of love and service. Guru Gobind Singh has himself mentioned this fact in his Bachittar Natak, thus :

“ਮੁਰ ਪਿਤ ਪੂਰਬ ਕੀਯਸਿ ਪਯਾਨਾ ॥ ਭਾਂਤ ਭਾਂਤ ਕੇ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਨਾ ॥

ਜਬ ਹੀ ਜਾਤ ਤ੍ਰਿਬੇਣੀ ਭਏ ॥ ਪੁੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਦਿਨ ਕਰਤ ਬਿਤਏ ॥

ਤਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਭਇਉ ॥ ਪਟਨਾ ਸਹਿਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਭਵ ਲਇਉ” ॥

“my father had departed for the East of the land and was visiting various holy places of pilgrimage. At the Tribeni, his days were spent in almsgiving and in other meritorious acts of piety. There, my light (soul)

manifested itself in human form (in the mother's womb) and then I took my birth in the city of Patna'.

The baby was named Gobind Rai. His mother, grandmother and the maternal uncle (Kirpal Chand) were all in Patna then, and they continued to stay there for about five years. Although, Guru Tegh Bahadur had his own dwellings in Anandpur, built by himself, yet to avoid any possible quarrels with Ram Rai, who was continually plotting against him over his so-called claims to Guruship, he preferred to let the family remain away from the Panjab alongwith himself, when he was going out for his missionary tour abroad. Later, Patna, being a quieter place, was chosen as best suited for the birth and growth of the child. He returned from abroad when the child was four years old and after about an year's stay there he proceeded to Anandpur alone, letting Gobind Rai and the rest of the family follow him, as soon as suitable travel-arrangements were made.

During the family's stay in Patna, the little child created the impression on the minds of men and women, he came in contact with, that he was destined to be a great man. His physical demeanour was, of course, most pleasing. His eyes were gay, bright and cheerful and seemed to reflect divine wisdom. The bewitchingly handsome face, the assertive yet unassuming utterances and the amiable and affectionate manners, made him the beloved of the people. To the boys of his age-group there seemed something mysteriously great and inspiring about him. In fact, he was their leader. He played with the games of skill and endurance, organised them into parties for mimic fights and encouraged and

complimented those among them who played well. He was brave and fearless and did not like any of his mates displaying subservient and slavish mentality. When, for instance, a mate looked at some high ranking officials with customary awe and fear, he turned away from him in disapproval. He wanted him to nurture his individuality, and not stifle it through debasing curbs and checks. To discerning men, there seemed in the child the Light of God which he went about scattering everywhere. It was a pleasure always to meet and talk to him, for, he shed lustre, love, light radiance and glory, all around. In short gaiety, buoyancy of spirit, carefree-ness, love of adventure and highly inspired impulses, characterised his conduct and behaviour.

Pandit Shiv Dutt, an old Brahmin and a Sanskrit Scholar of Patna, was the first to recognise him, as a God-conscious being. The Pandit was himself a holy and pious man. He had worshipped idols, practised austerities and lived a life of renunciation. Yet, he was not quite satisfied with what he was doing. True, he was a spirit-hungry man but his soul was not quite at peace nor were the questionings of his heart stilled. Yet, he was essentially a man of faith and had a devotional bent of mind. Though his search was misguided, the deep-rooted faith in the world as a moral existence, had ennobled him. Faith, really, was a great power in itself. All great men who had moved the earth, were men of deep faith. Even ordinary men had often acquired great strength, whenever they were imbued with some strong faith. Shiv Dutt was one such man. When he met the child Gobind, he was much impressed by the child's piety, moral fervour

and spiritual grandeur. He found him loving, generous, sweet, vivacious and lively. The jolly little spirit, seemed to derive special pleasure in surprising others through a play of wit and humour, that he possessed in the richest measure. The Pandit had noticed all this and in the process, the worship of dead idols gradually lost all meanings for him. He saw before him a living idol, an embodiment of love and truth. He felt within himself that love and reverence for this great child were things of much higher value than the worship of mere stones, that did not speak. He realised that to be lost in the love of this child was the most ennobling and health-giving passion. He had already learnt, though only as a theological concept, that God was present in all, but this little child was God's most wonderful manifestation. It seemed to him as the living image of Krishna. Religion had now assumed a new form for the Pandit. It had become the feeling of the soul in which all its selfishness had melted off in the divine love he now experienced. He declared that there was God in this lovely child. He began to love him intensely, meet him frequently and address him as his dearest child. The emptiness of mind, created through the worship of stones, had disappeared, the Divine love having wrought the miracle. His heart was now constantly filled with love, and, in consequence, joy and peace resided in the recesses of his soul.

The Pandit felt completely conquered and he went about singing the praises of the child. He talked to Raja Fateh Chand Maini and his queen—Kishori Devi, also, about the marvellous child of Patna. The Raja and his Rani had no son and they were restless and unhappy, on that account. They happened to

believe that without a son, no one could ever reach the Heavens. From the time they heard the praises of Gobind Rai, they began to take interest in him. The child noticed it and felt pleased. One day, in his usual happy, vivacious and cheerful mood he threw himself lovingly in the queen's lap, addressing her as his dear mother. The action filled the queen with immense joy and in the loving embrace, she felt she had got a son in this child. She thought she had got what she wanted and had no need for any more son. Here Was a son whom both the Raja and the queen could love, cherish and consider as wholly theirs. He became the joy of their lives. They felt that a God-filled child had come to them, through His Grace and they wanted nothing more. In loving devotion, they built a big house for him and the family.

In the same spirit, two Muslim Nawabs, Rahim Bux and Karim Bux, impressed by the child's piety, bestowed a garden and some land, as loving gifts.

Yes, the child was an extraordinary genius. He was favoured by Providence to possess spiritual qualities in the most transcendental form. for that age, Most of these qualities had come to him from his holy parents. His father was an image of peace and wisdom. imbued, through and through, with the love of God. For twenty years, as we shall see in the next chapter, this holy father had been in solitude for quiet meditations and had come to possess a soul without an equal. The mother was equally blessed with a saintly nature. She had a quiet and peaceful countenance and a compassionate heart from which flowed charity, sympathy and love for the poor and the needy. Gobind Rai was really most fortunate in

having such great parents and further in having Guru Hai Gobind and Guru Arjan Dev as his grand-father and great grand-father. These and other factors contributed to make the child so highly gifted and so unlike other children.

He was passing his days very happily in Patna when, as last, in pursuance of the wishes of the father, the family had to shift to Anandpur. And when the departure became imminent, the child's admirers were sad at heart. They felt that a void was going to be created which it would not be possible to fill. They expressed, on this memorable occasion, deep emotions of love, which signified the indelible impression created in their minds. Though Gobind Rai was, then, only a child, he talked to them like an old man. He said, they should not think of meeting in the physical sense and should give him a permanent place in their hearts. He told them, in the innocent manner of a child, that the best way to meet him was to serve his mates with sweets, puries and roasted grams, the things he loved so well. If a physical meeting was desired at all, it should be enough to look at his cradle which he was leaving behind in Patna. He could also be seen through so many other things he was leaving but he was more clearly present in his mates.

Exactly similar sentiments were expressed when the party, in its onward march, was in Dinapur and an old lady offered to the party khicheri, cooked in a handi (earthenware). He said to her, on parting, that if she loved him, she could see him by feeding hungry stomachs with her khicheri.

During the journey to Anandpur further, the party had to pass through several important towns, and everywhere Gobind Rai endeared himself to Hindus, Muslims and others, alike. In Lakhanpur, one, Pir Araf Din, a highly respected Muslim divine, was much influenced by the personality of the child. He was passing, one day, in his palanquine when he saw the child playing with other children of his age. He was so bewitched by his manners and behaviour that he came down from the palanquine to have a chat with him. He was deeply impressed and his eyes reflected mute adoration for the little child and this fact the Pir's Muslim companions also noticed. They did not like that a non-muslim should engage the attention of their Pir to that extent, blinded, as they were, by a fanatically communal approach to all matters. The Pir told them that the Light of God seemed to shine in the eyes of the child and he should not be asked to turn away from it, simply because it came from a non-muslim. Wherever God's Glory was manifest, it should be a pleasing sight for all, irrespective of race, religion or land. He said, an eye should be developed that could see God's Glory wherever the same was reflected.

At last, the party reached Anandpur, a few months before the Baisakhi gathering of that year and was received by the people most enthusiastically. Soon, the town became a place of pilgrimage, The devotees from all parts of the country came so see the young prince and there were great rejoicings for good many days. They brought valuable presents and gifts which Gobind Rai gave away to his playmates. He preferred weapons and loved hunting and mimic fight. Anandpur assumed

the look of a festival, full of joy, mirth und laughter. A learned scholar, Sahib Chand, was soon deputed to teach Gurmukhi to Gobind Rai. He had already started to learn Hindi and Sanskrit during his stay in Patna. Now he had a tutor in Qazi Pir Mohammad Din to teach him Persian also. His mornings and evenings were, of course, devoted exclusively to prayer. In the use of all kinds of weapons he was entrusted to a Rajput who gave him training in horsemanship as well. In short, he was being very well equipped mentally and physically, so that when the Call came, he was not found wanting. And like a true genius that he was, he learnt everything quickly. He soon became fully conversant with the hymns of the Holy Granth, and the philosophy contained in them. Dr. Narang writes : 'He received the best education that the time could give him and ran through the whole of Persian, Sanskrit, epic and historical literature'.

Things went on like this for some years. But Fate overruled the destiny of men. After only a few years of active life in Anandpur, the young Gobind Rai was called upon to face the first great ordeal of his life. God had willed that he should make the highest sacrifice at that young age—the sacrifice of his dear holy Guru-father. We shall see in the next chapter how well he acquitted himself in the great trial, Providence had placed him in. He proved thereby, even at that age, that the destiny of the land could be safely placed into his worthy hands. He was, without doubt, most fitted to play the role of a saviour, a liberator and a redeemer.

CHAPTER V

The martyrdom way to save Dharma

“ਮਰਣੁ ਮਣਸਾਂ ਸੁਰਿਆਂ ਹਕੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੈ” ॥
ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“Dying is the privilege of brave men, provided they die on becoming acceptable to God”.

Guru Nanak in Wadhans.

The emperor, Aurangzeb, had, by this time, quickened the pace of forcible conversions. He knew that in making his way to the throne, he had perpetrated many wrongs and, for this, had alienated Muslim public opinion. He thought he could win back the confidence of the Muslims, through a wholesale extirpation of the Hindus, unwilling to embrace Islam. We have discussed already in the second chapter the methods he had employed in the realisation of that objective. Half the people of Kashmir had actually gone over to Islam, when five hundred Pandits of the State, under the leadership of Kirpa Ram of Mattan, came to Guru Tegh Bahadur, in a deputation to seek his protection for the preservation of the honour of the Hindu Faith. They said, Aurangzeb had given them an ultimatum that they must make a choice between death and Islam. The Guru pondered in silence over the tales of woe

related to him by the Pandits and came to the conclusion that if the holiest person in the land offered to die a martyr, for the vindication of Dharma, it might still rouse the dead souls of the brutish oppressors. In any case, this kind of martyrdom, under-taken by the holiest man for the holiest cause, would purify the people and generate infinite power. Gobind Rai, then only nine or ten years old, was playing nearby. Finding his father plunged in deep thought and coming to know from him the whole story of woe as also the need for a sacrifice of the holiest man, he immediately resolved the father's poser by telling him that he himself was the holiest man in the land and thus best qualified for the sort of sacrifice envisaged by him. The Guru was pleased, beyond measure, and felt fully satisfied that his own son's testimony for his fitness for sacrifice, was most valuable, as it had come from a person, potentially as great as he himself was, and also because it was the most disinterested testimony. In fact, the testifier was to be the greatest sufferer if his counsel were given effect to. Thus, the Guru thought that he was being declared as the holiest man, on the testimony of an other equally holy person, who was also his own son. There was before him the earlier testimony too of his own father, Guru Hargobind, who had been building him up for that kind of sacrifice. History bears out that in the early period of his life this man of destiny, delighted to live in solitude for his meditations and was inclined to be averse to the affairs of the world. Mata Nanki (his mother) requested her husband, Guru Hargobind, to dissuade his son from a course that affected his health and well-being. The husband replied that he should be allowed to carry on as he liked, since

he was being prepared for very great tasks ahead, and there was none else who could endure the unendurable as he could. He assured her further that her son possessed Divine Vision and his glory was bound to spread in his own time as being the Guru of Gurus and the saviour of mankind, through the powers he would come to have on achieving, in course of time, complete self-abnegation. The mother was made to realise that her son was destined to become the great spiritual force, capable of shaking the foundation of a mighty power—a power, most tyrannical and unscrupulous also.

We have given above the background of what was inevitably coming. The cause the Guru was to espouse was great and holy. It had, as its aim, the preservation of Dharma, through the destruction of an organised evil, in its worst form. So, he ultimately decided, with the fullest concurrence of his son, to lay down his life at the altar of Dharma. He told the Pandits to go and tell the emperor that he should first deal with him (the Guru) and if he succeeded in converting him, all the rest would follow. He further made it known that he would meet the emperor and talk to him about forcible conversions and other allied matters. He had resolved to do his best to convince the emperor that the path he had chosen was unholy and was bound to lead to dangerous consequences. The Pandits left fully satisfied and the Guru was busy, soon after, preparing to depart for Delhi. The situation, as it stood, then, was naturally too painful for the family to bear, as it meant sure death of the holy Guru. Yet, the young Gobind Rai took it in a spirit of calm resignation. The father

consoled the rest of them. He said, family ties were all impermanent things and death was inevitable. God was the only Reality and therefore they should learn to rise above selfish considerations, for the love of truth, justice and righteousness. He further said, he was going to Delhi to speak to the great bigot that he should change his ways towards the people but he was also prepared to lay down life, if that was inevitable. At long last he departed but during his journey, he halted at several places to strengthen people on the path of Dharma. He diverted his course to Agra too, to meet Mai Bhago and some other highly devoted Sikhs of the place and to speak to them of the difficult days ahead. His arrival to Delhi was delayed, on that account, but it did not matter to him. He was to appear in his own time and not to suit the convenience of tyrants. The delay caused suspicion in the minds of the rulers, that he was hiding for fear of death and a reward was set on his head. The Guru, however, offered himself for arrest, as soon as his work of awakening people to the dangers ahead, was done. The wily emperor received him, rather courteously. He thought it was expedient to deal with him politely, because if he could be induced to accept Islam, the whole of India would easily come into the Muslim fold. Many temptations were also offered. The Guru would be made the spiritual head (the highest Pir) of Muslim India, if only he agreed to let the Hindus alone, to take care of themselves. If power was desired, he would be made the Governor of the Punjab. The Guru replied calmly yet firmly that it was unholy to force people to accept a faith they did not want. It was foolish to believe that entry into Heavens depended on

the acceptance of this or that faith. Actions and not labels were necessary for getting acceptance at His Court. The Guru told him further that he had no need for the worldly pleasures that power could give, and spiritual headship was not in any-body's hands to be given away as a gift. The pleasurable things of life, which the emperor valued, were illusions and had no attraction for him. Above all, he could not give up his cause that was dearer to him than life. The emperor realised that the Guru was a hard nut to crack. He put him in a narrow iron cage and inflicted on him physical tortures. Mati Dass, Satti Dass, Dyal Dass and other Sikhs who had accompanied the Guru, were also put in separate dungeons, tortured and told to embrace Islam which, the emperor said, was the most perfect religion. Mati Dass was the first to shout fearlessly at the emperor to the effect that he would not succeed in forcing his religion on the Sikhs of the Guru. He ridiculed him by pointing out that Islam could not be considered a complete religion merely on the score of its outer form. The essence of religion was life lived in the service of others and not in forcing people to accept particular dogmas and creeds. Even the outer form, so much boasted of, was incomplete. Humorously referring to circumcision, Mati Dass pointed out that it could not be the right thing to do, otherwise God should have created men in the circumcised state. Mati Dass was sawn alive into small bits for ridicule and defiance. Next, it was Dyala's turn. He called the emperor a tyrant who was capable of inflicting such barbarities as were witnessed in the case of Mati Dass. Dyala was put into the boiling cauldron and Satti Dass was executed. Some more Sikhs were simi-

larly tortured without any of them giving way. The Guru was, of course, the last one to be dealt with.

Macauliffe has, in this connection, introduced into his chronicle a curious story clearly woven out of political motives. The Guru, according to the story, was charged with breach of etiquette and propriety. He was, one day, strolling at the top storey of the prison in a casual way and happened to be looking towards the South, which was also the direction of the imperial apartments of the queens. The implication of the charge, however, was that he was looking towards the harem. The Guru, according to Macauliffe, had replied that he was not looking towards the queens but in the direction of the Europeans who were coming from beyond the seas to tear the queen's purdah and the king's empire. Now clearly the whole story is a damned nonsense. The Guru's purity of character was beyond question even in the eyes of that bigot and he could not have suggested it, even as a remote inference. The fact of the matter is that the emperor had simply asked the Guru casually, without imputing any motives, as to what he was looking at in that direction. The Guru replied that he was looking towards the throne that was soon coming to an end, for, a cruel regime could not live for long. This reply was enough to bring the emperor into rage and he ordered that the Guru be beheaded. Chroniclers state that as the head rolled off, gales and earthquakes shook the whole earth. Yes, it is a fact that the whole country was shaken to its depth when such a great and holy man was being put to the sword. But this shaking is not to be taken too literally. Guru Gobind Singh has himself interpreted the same in Bachittar Natak, thus :

‘ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਕਰੀ ਨ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਆਨ ॥
 ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੇ ਚਲਤ ਭਇਉ ਜਗਤ ਮੇਂ ਸੋਕ ॥
 ਹੋ ਹੋ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਕਰੇ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਸੁਰ ਲੋਕ’ ॥

“None hath ever made so great a deed of sacrifice, as Guru Tegh Bahadur had done. There was deep mourning throughout the land. The whole world was shaken to the depth with grief, while there was the trumpet of victory in Heavens (for the Guru had won against brute force)”.

The head had, in the killing, been separated from the body and the corpse was left in the bazars to serve as a warning to others that they should dread the might of the Mughal.

Two devout Sikhs, Bhai Jaitsa and Bhai Udhai, both disguised as Muslims, picked up the head. Jaitsa carried the same to Anandpur, where it was cremated in the usual ceremonial way. One, Lakhi, a disciple of the Guru, happened to be the arsenal contractor. He possessed seven hundred empty carts which he employed for his daily work. He planned with Bhai Udhai to remove the body from the place with the help of the carts. They succeeded in their mission, helped by the evening dust, raised by the carts. The body was taken to a place, now called Rakab Ganj, and set on fire. Before the sentinels on guard could know and send troops for its recovery, it was burnt up and finished.

We may pause here for a while and think. This great event must not be allowed to pass without a thorough examination of the lessons it has for mankind. Guru Tegh Bahadur had said that the holiest man in the land should be sacrificed to save Dharma and seers do

not make statements, particularly in a crisis, without having a deep import. Why did the Guru speak in terms of holy death in relation to Dharma and in what circumstances was it holy to lay down life? Let the Guru himself provide an answer.

First, we may observe that death and decay, on the physical plane, are the natural and inescapable phenomena. All must die, yet life continues to be held as a very dear thing. The instinct of self-preservation works incessantly from the tiny micro-organisms to the highly developed beings, including man. Therefore, in the context of the universal instinct to live, the martyrdom of the Guru and some of his Sikhs cannot but inspire awe and admiration and these are further heightened by the fact that it presents wonderful pictures of persons laying down their holy lives cheerfully for causes they held dearer than life. They underwent suffering and self-effacement, unparalleled in the annals of mankind. It is not a joke to be sawn alive or be peeled in the boiling water, as Mati Dass and Dyala had done, and yet remain happy and steadfast. But it would be a mistake to suppose that they could have commanded so much adoration and respect, carried on from generation to generation, merely for dying, though dying, in itself, has its own glamour. Many people have died for causes they held dear and yet they were soon forgotten. Death is sometimes courted in a thoughtless and rash manner, some times in anger excitement or obstinacy and some other times in a spirit of revenge or under some other momentary impulse. Many women have, in the past, willingly offered for con cremation with their dead husbands, in pursuance of a hideous custom or a fashion. Warriors too have often laid down

their lives heroically in the field of battle to prove to the world that they were not weak or cowardly. Religious fanatics, in all ages, have braved death with stoic heroism under false notions of religious exaltations and in the hope that they would be applauded as martyrs of the faith. Thus, mere dying, however heroic and brave, is not necessarily an achievement of a high order. Suffering for its own sake, can have no meaning. Mortifying the body performing tortuous mental and physical exercises, cutting in twains over stakes in holy places like Kashi and undergoing penance with bodies reversed, were once believed to be meritorious and pious acts. Guru Gobind Singh ridiculed such purposeless sufferings, thus :

“ਕੂਕਤ ਫਿਰਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਰੋਵਤ ਮਰਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਜਲ ਮੈਂ ਡੁਬਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਆਗ
ਮੈਂ ਜਰਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਕੇਤੇ ਗੰਗ ਵਾਸੀ ਕੇਤੇ ਮਦੀਨਾ ਮਕਾ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ
ਕੇਤਕ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਕੇ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਏਈ ਫਿਰਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਕਰਵਤ ਸਹਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਭੂਮਿ
ਮੈਂ ਗਡਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਸੁਆ ਪੈ ਚੜਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਦੁਖ ਕੋ ਭਰਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਗੈਨ ਮੈਂ
ਉਡਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਜਲ ਮੈਂ ਰਹਤ ਕੇਤੇ ਗਯਾਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਜਕ ਜਾਰੇਈ
ਮਰਤ ਹੈ” ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ, ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘How many go about shouting ? How many die weeping ? How many drown themselves in water ? How many burn themselves in fire ? How many dwell by the Ganges ? How many are devoted to Mecca or Medina ? How many wander as anchorites ? How many allow themselves to be cut by the saw ? How many bury themselves in the earth and how many get impaled and add to their sufferings ? How many fly in the skies and how many live in water ? Yet for want of Divine Wisdom they all will be burnt in fire’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

Guru Arjan had, earlier, said the same thing, in his Rukhmani, thus :

“ਨਿਮਖ ਨਿਮਖ ਕਰਿ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਕਟਾਵੈ ॥ ਤਉ ਭੀ ਹਉਮੈ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਵੈ ॥”

‘If the body be cut, limb by limb, the filth of the ego departeth not’.

And, earlier still, this is what Guru Nanak had said ;

‘ਅਰਧ ਸਰੀਰ ਕਟਾਈਐ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਵਤੁ ਧਰਾਇ ॥ ਤਨੁ ਹੈਮੈਚਲਿ
ਗਾਲੀਐ ਭੀ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ’ ॥ ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘If thou cuttest thy body into two or gettest thy head sawn or wastest thy body in the cold of the Himalayas, the disease of thy mind will not be cured’.

Guru Nanak in Sri Rag.

Aimless suffering reveals either a state of mental disequilibrium or a misguided or misplaced zeal based on wrong values of life. Exactly in the same way, dying for its own sake is not a worthy aim. Human life is a precious gift of God for the attainment of which even demigods are supposed to have a keen longing and is, therefore, not a thing to be thrown off purposelessly. The Sikh Gurus sanctified human body, as being the temple of God, through which He was to be realised and therefore it was man’s sacred possession to be well looked after and never to be thrown off lightly. Aimless dying was a suicide and a sin against God and against one’s own self.

Then what is true dying, according to Sikhism ? What is it that makes men martyrs and gives them what they call deathlessness, a state, devoid of pain, suffering or sorrow and so highly inspiring and holy that it must find a reverential mention in the daily Sikh prayer ? The answer to these questions is amply provided by

the great heroes whose martyrdom we are examining here—Guru Tegh Bahadur and his Sikhs. True, they present the image of indomitable spirit, unshakable resolve and steadfastness in the face of terrible sufferings inflicted on them by the cruel and wicked despots whose word was considered, in those dark times, as law. How was it possible, people wonder, that a man seated in the cauldron of boiling water for being roasted alive and another for being sawn alive and still another for being tortured in a narrow iron cage, could still, not only keep their equipoise, but also had not a word of complaint or of remorse to offer. People are so much struck with horror at the enormity of sufferings undergone by them and at the unprecedented composure maintained by them, that the image of these holy men remains confined to the episode of their martyrdom alone, which, in fact, was only an event taking place at a particular period of their lives. People extol the dazzling event of their lives, but forget other aspects of those lives, which were of much greater significance. This approach cannot but give them a very incomplete picture of their true greatness. Even if God had not Willed that they should die as martyrs, they would still be as great as they appeared on account of the martyrdom, which had presented just an occasion to test their real greatness and was not in itself everything. It should be remembered that it was not a chance occurrence that they clashed against the tyrants of the times and died, in consequence. It was rather the natural results of all that they stood for. The programme of life that they had set before themselves, could not but and in that kind of suffering, sooner or later, and this could be avoided only if they were

prepared to give up that programme and make peace with their opponents, by compromising their principles, as worldly people would. If they wanted to save life merely, they could do it in so many ways. We have seen that Guru Tegh Bahadur was offered a number of temptations. But no alternative and no formula for compromise, however pleasant and attractive, could be accepted at the cost of what was held dearer than life. The path of suffering was deliberately chosen. And as all good things demanded a price, the Guru had decided to pay the price. He did not even wait for the emperor to arrest him. He offered himself for arrest. How could he remain unconcerned in the face of so much evil before his eyes? There was bound to be a clash, in one form or the other, between the good and the evil. Guru Nanak had said :

“ਭਗਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਸੈਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਜੋੜੁ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਆਇਆ” ॥

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“It is never possible for men of God and men of the world to come together”.

Guru Nanak in Manjh.

Honest and good men must be ever prepared to suffer so long as there was evil in the world. This provides us a clue as to what is meant by true dying. It is a kind of dying that has its roots in true living. And for men living truly i.e. living a life of truth, love and righteousness, there is no escape from a clash with evil and in that clash, situations may arise when the supreme sacrifice of life may have to be made. All the same, dying is never to be made a cheap affair. Life is too valuable a thing to admit of an exercise of frivolity or light-heartedness, in respect of it. The

Gurus have, by their own examples, laid down conditions under which the supreme sacrifice is justified, thus :

“ਮਰਣੁ ਮੁਣਸਾ ਸੂਰਿਆਂ ਹਕੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੈ” ॥

“Dying is the privilege of brave men, provided they die on becoming acceptable to God (Then they are worthy and fully qualified)’.

For this kind of dying, it is not enough to be merely brave, for, many brave men can be scoundrels. The privilege goes not to a mere warrior but to a warrior who is also a saint first, one who, besides being brave is also worthy, on the moral and spiritual planes. Sometimes, dishonest and unscrupulous people make sacrifices and, in so doing, they advance causes too but they do not become martyrs thereby, because they do not know the art of true living from which alone can true dying emerge. A man lives truly if he is truthful, loving, humble, sweet, compassionate, forbearing and patient. Bhai Gurdas says, in his Var :

“ਸ਼ਬਰ ਸਿਦਕ ਸਹੀਦ ਭਰਮ ਭਉ ਖੋਵਨਾ” ॥ ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ॥

“A Shahid (martyr) is one who hath faith in his cause and patience (stead fastness in suffering) and is free from fear or doubt”.

Var Bhai Gurdas.

Again, for true martyrdom there is another condition. The martyr of the highest order is not only brave and saintly but is ever prepared to lay down even life, if his cause is really great and approved. Guru Tegh Bahadur had these conditions before him when he wanted testimony for sacrificing the holiest man for the holiest cause i.e. for Dharma. This meant that human life

was not to be staked by an unholy person, nor over a small matter, nor under any momentary impulse of a doubtful value, as saint Kabir had said :

‘ਸੁਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਚਾਨੀਐ ਜੁ ਲਰੈ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ’ ॥ ਮਾਰੂ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ
‘Truly brave is he who fights for Dharma’.

Kabir in Maru.

Thus a martyr is a brave man and he fights and even dies for a highly noble cause but this, in consequence of having already lived life truly :

‘ਸਹਜੇ ਮਰੈ ਅਮਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਸੋਈ’ ॥
‘One who dies truly becomes deathless’.

Kabir in Gauri.

And he alone can die truly who lives truly and who works and suffers for great causes.

The life of Guru Tegh Bahadur amply fulfils the conditions stated above, for true dying i.e. for true martyrdom. He lived truly and made himself an instrument in God's Hands, to do His Bidding. He had a very busy life, dedicated to the service of humanity, when not a minute passed in vain. He undertook an extensive tour of the whole country and prepared people to face the battle of life, in all its forms. It took him 20 years to become the great spiritual power that he became. We may examine him from some of his life events to visualise how great he had become.

Dhirmal was violently jealous of the Guru's power. He was bitter for having been by-passed in the matter of accession to Guru-ship. To avenge himself on the Guru he had made an alliance with a Masand, Sihan, and had commissioned him to kill the Guru. A bullet was

actually fired for the purpose, though it missed its mark. The Masand was siezed and brought with his hands tied behind the back and his property was looted. But the Guru maintained evenness of mind, ordered the Masand's release and returned the property.

The priests of Amritsar closed the door of Harimandir against him but he offered no opposition and left quietly off. Really remarkable was the personality of the Guru as an embodiment of self-denial on the one hand and of unbounded love for humanity on the other. His was a life of true living from which had emerged true dying, the thing we call martyrdom. It was his true living that was being put to the test, at the crucial time of suffering for the great cause he had undertaken. He was to destroy the cruelest power, that had become a curse for mankind. We may give here the statement of Guru Gobind Singh in his Bachittar Natak to visualise how great this martyr was, and how amply he fulfilled conditions for true martyrdom :

“ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਝੁ ਰਾਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਾਕਾ ॥ ਕੀਨੋ ਬਡੋ ਕਲੂ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਕਾ ॥
ਸਾਧਨ ਹੇਤ ਇਤੀ ਜਿਨ ਕਰੀ ॥ ਸੀਸ ਦੀਆ ਪਰ ਸੀ ਨ ਉਚਰੀ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸਾਕਾ ਜਿਨ ਕੀਆ ॥ ਸੀਸ ਦੀਆ ਪਰ ਸਿਰਰ ਨ ਦੀਆ ॥
ਨਾਟਕ ਚੇਟਕ ਕੀਏ ਕੁਕਾਜਾ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਗਨ ਕੇ ਆਵਤ ਲਾਜਾ ॥
ਠੀਕਰ ਫੌਰਿ ਦਿਲੀਸ ਸਿਰ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪੁਰ ਕੀਉ ਪਯਾਨ ॥ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ
ਸੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਕਰੀ ਨ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਆਨ ॥ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੇ ਚਲਤ
ਭਇਉ ਜਗਤ ਮੈ ਸੋਕ ॥ ਹੈ ਹੈ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਭਇਓ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਸੁਰ
ਲੋਕ” ॥

“The Guru protected the Tilak (frontal mark) and the Janeu (sacrificial thread) of the Hindus. His sacrifice was a great event of heroism in the Kal (dark) Age. He made himself a shield for holymen and gave

his head without even uttering a groan. He displayed a great event of heroism for the sake of true Dharma. He gave his head but did not falter from his resolve. God's people were ashamed of performing unholy feats to prove to the tyrants that they possessed miraculous powers. He broke his potsherd (body) on the head of the Delhi king (Aurangzeb) and went his way to Heavens. None had ever done an act so great as Guru Tegh Bahadur had done. The whole world was in mourning. It was shaken to the depth with grief while there was the trumpet of victory in Heavens (for, he had won against force)".

In the above description one can see at once the Guru's stature and how eminently fitted he was in respect of the conditions laid down for true martyrdom. The great events of heroic suffering was his own choosing and self-inflicted. The most remarkable thing about it was that the path of suffering was chosen to save the Hindu Dharma, a faith which was not his own, strictly speaking. He had a great cause before him when he firmly grasped the hand of the oppressed Hindus, never to be given up, whatever the cost :—

“ਬਾਂਹੇ ਜਿਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਕੜੀਐ ਸਿਰ ਦੀਜੈ ਬਾਂਹ ਨ ਛੋੜੀਐ ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਧਰ ਪਈਐ ਧਰਮ ਨ ਛੋੜੀਐ” ॥

“When the hand of some one is grasped, it must not be forsaken even if the head were to be sacrificed. Guru Tegh Bahadur said, men should offer for self-effacement but the faith was never to be given up”. He did not utter a groan of sorrow or of pain during the most painful trial he was passing through. It shows the strength of his character. He was so completely absorbed in himself and in the cause he

had espoused that he forgot all pain and suffering. In fact, he had withdrawn his mind from them. He was in tune with God's Will and therefore had learnt to laugh in the face of the inevitable. It is true that the material body, when tortured, feels the pain so long as the soul is not liberated from its bondage. Even sin may come to tempt it. But those who have learnt to withdraw from the body, by merging themselves in God, do not have any consciousness of pain or suffering and they overcome all temptations in the most natural manner. Here is his own hymn in Gauri that depicts wonderfully this state of mind :

"ਸਾਧੋ ਮਨ ਕਾ ਮਾਨੁ ਤਿਆਗਉ ॥ ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਦੁਰਜਨ ਕੀ
ਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਭਾਗਉ ॥ ਸੁਖ ਦੁਖ ਦੋਨੋ ਸਮ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਅਉਰ
ਮਾਨੁ ਅਪਮਾਨਾ ॥ ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਅਤੀਤਾ ਤਿਨਿ ਜਗਿ ਤਤੁ
ਪਛਾਨਾ ॥ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਦੋਉ ਤਿਆਗੈ ਖੋਜੈ ਪਦੁ ਨਿਰਬਾਨਾ ॥
ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹੁ ਖੇਲੁ ਕਠਨੁ ਹੈ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਨਾ" ॥

"O holymen, renounce the pride of the mind. Day and night, flee from lust, wrath and the companionship of evil minded persons. The man who takes pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, as if the same and keepeth aloof from joy and sorrow, hath recognised the Essence in the world, One should renounce both praise and blame and search for a state of painlessness, But, Nanak, it is difficult to play such a game. Only a rarely good men knoweth the way".

And his own life shows that no other person knew the way or the art of living, as stated in the hymn, above so well as he did and therefore he was best fitted for the sacrifice he made. During the period of suffering of an unprecedented kind, he did not even complain. There was not a word of hatred, anger or bitterness

against any of his tormenters as confirmed by his son's testimony, examined above, as given in the Bachittar Natak. He was asked to display some miracle to prove to the world that he was a holy man. The Guru laughed at the suggestion. The display of super-physical powers, as we have examined already, had no relation to spirituality. It rather showed weakness of character and merited severe condemnation, which the Guru did. He wanted to appear to the world just natural and so human in every way. He would not entertain a suggestion that smacked of compromise with principles. Fearlessness and steadfastness were engrained in his being and these qualities flowed out of the divine soul that he had. Here is the sige of soul.

‘ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕੋ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ’ ॥ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥

‘One who neither inspires fear in others nor has any fear of others, is a true divine’.

Shalok of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

The hymn under examination, particularly points out that the potsherd (the body) was broken not over any small matter but for the destruction of the cruelest empire the world had ever witnessed. The spiritual loftiness of the Guru had made him the embodiment of truth, love, humanity, compassion, forgiveness, contentment and humility. Service of humanity had become a passion with him and it flowed from him in a spontaneous manner. True, there was a time in his life when he preferred aloofness from the affairs of the world and was not considered fully competent for Guruship. But when he matured, he became a power. The cold and negative aspects of aloofness had finally

yielded to active love of mankind which, of course, continued to stand on the bedrock of self-denial, the true basis of renunciation. Thus the art of true dying sprang out of the art of true living. Kabir says in a shalok :

‘ਕਬੀਰ ਮਰਤਾ ਮਰਤਾ ਜਗੁ ਮੂਆ ਮਰਿ ਭੀ ਨ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਐਸੇ ਮਰਨੇ ਜੋ ਮਰੈ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨ ਮਰਨਾ ਹੋਇ’ ॥

“O Kabir, the whole world dies, yet no one knows the true art of dying. If one knew the art, one would not have to die again’. This dying, really, entails dying to the self.

Again :—

“ਕਬੀਰ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਰਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਗ ਡਰੈ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਅਨੰਦੁ ॥ ਮਰਨੇ ਹੀ
ਤੇ ਪਾਈਐ ਪੂਰਨ ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦੁ” ॥

“O Kabir, Death from which the whole world fears has a joy for me. It is by dying (i.e. dying to the self) that the Supreme Lord of perfect Bliss is attained’. That was the true basis on which the Guru and his brave Sikhs stood to face the great ordeal through which they had passed. These men were examples of intoxicated persons, in communion with God, a Power that had held complete sway over them, and, in consequence of it they acted under the promptings and love of that Power. They were imbued with so high a spirit of service and love, that they were ever ready to sacrifice anything to please that Power. They were convinced that although the path they had chosen was full of difficulties, it led to deathlessness and permanent happiness. And it is quite true to say that they have

become deathless, at least in the sense that for the example of self-abnegation they have set, they will inspire men for all time, will be cherished as martyrs and will ever be remembered with love, faith and veneration.

CHAPTER VI

Battles of Bhangani, Nadaun and Anandpur.

“ਨਿਰਵੈਰੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਵੈਰੁ ਰਚਾਇੰਦਾ ਆਪਣੈ ਘਰਿ ਲੂਕੀ ਲਾਇ” ॥

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥

“Whosoever cherisheth enmity with one free from enmity, setteth his own house on fire”.

Shalok of Guru Amar Dass.

Immediately after the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Gobind Rai was formally installed on the Gaddi (seat of Guruship), on first Baisakh Sambat 1732, under instructions from the Guru, conveyed through Baba Budha's brother who had been with him, prior to his execution and who had now brought with him, Bhai Ram Kaur, the Baba's young son, to perform the ceremony of succession to Guruship. The cruel act of execution of one considered to be the holiest person, had shocked the whole country. The Sikhs, in particular, were most furious and talked of avenging themselves over the tyrant, Aurangzeb. But the new Guru would not think on these lines. For him, revenge was the antithesis of love, self-denial and the spirit of sacrifice, for righteous causes, as Guru Ram Dass had said :

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਅੰਦਰਹੁ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਦੋਖੈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਇਕੁ ਸੋਇ” ॥
ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥

“The true Guru is inwardly free from enmity and findeth the One Pervading Lord, in all”.

Guru Ram Dass in Gauri.

The path of self-effacement had been deliberately chosen by his father and with his fullest concurrence, with a view to rouse among men the spirit of humanity, that had died out in the land. In this context, revenge was too small a thing to be favoured. The event had served its purpose all right. It had demonstrated to every body that the rulers were soulless and resistance was necessary if honourable living was desired. Other methods had been tried, without yielding fruit. Evil had entrenched itself tightly and had now to be resisted, through violent means. But people had to be, first, hardened and indoctrinated for every kind of resistance and imbued with a will to fight against a soulless regime. True, the Sikhs had acquired, under Guru Hargobind, some experience of a violent struggle. But by the time of Guru Gobind Singh, it had become a thing of the past. The path of peace, love and non-violence, pursued by the succeeding Gurus, had killed every kind of violence from the hearts of men. If the sword was to be unsheathed again, the people must have the will to fight and must be taught anew the technique of fighting. The spirit of bravery and fearlessness as witnessed under Guru Hargobind was there all right but actual fighting was a different matter. Above all, the people had to be equipped with moral and spiritual strength and their social and national fabrics had to be suitably organised to sustain them for a long and

hard struggle. War did seem inevitable, yet essential preparations had to be made, and for many years, before effective resistance was made possible,

The Guru immediately took up the work of education in his own hands and this went on for fifteen to twenty years, though, it is difficult to specify the exact number. Spiritual awakening, cultural activities of a creative kind and military preparedness, proceeded side by side. His own Katha (exposition from the Holy Granth) in the morning after Kirtan, became a regular feature of the daily programme. He himself listened Kirtan, sung by his bards, with unerring regularity. Poets and literateurs joined him in the task of translating Persian and Sanskrit works on the warlike deeds of Rama, Krishna and other heroes of old, into simple Hindi. Their martial exploits were sung by the court musicians to inspire the listeners for action in a good cause, in both the social and the political fields. The Guru's own writings elevated and galvanised people of all castes, previously divided among themselves but now blended together as one unit. Sport and manly games were suitably organised. Arms and uniforms were worn when shooting, racing, archery and other games, involving risk and skill, were played. Weapons, arms, horses, ammunition and military equipment were requisitioned. Sharply pointed arrows were had from Lahore. Orders were sent to Sikhs and admirers that devotional offerings should, in future, include arms and weapons of war. The Guru personally looked to the comforts of visitors, in respect of food and lodging. Anandpur (Makhowal) presented the spectacle of a great centre of life, emitting spiritual, moral and physical sustenance. A corps in military form was organised, to which regular drill was provided

with daily beating of a big war drum, specially constructed under the Guru's orders and supervision. Slowly and gradually the arms increased. Duni Chand, a trader from Kabul, brought a tent of unsurpassed splendour as an offering to be made on the Baisakhi day. It was so artistically prepared that it pleased everybody. Another valuable present came from Assam. Raja Ram Rai, the one time ruler of that country, was a devotee of Guru Tegh Bahadur. After the Raja's death, his son, Raja Rattan Rai, succeeded to the throne and through the influence of his mother, he too started to cherish the Guru. He was told that the Guru loved weapons of war and so he was keen to serve him with weapons. He came to Anandpur with his mother to get the Guru's blessings as also to make an offering, among other things, of a very well trained elephant named Parshadi. The young Raja was much impressed with the Guru's personality and could not help staying with him for several months. At parting, he expressed the wish that his offering represented his love and devotion to the Guru personally and was not to be parted with. On reaching home, he built a temple too in honour of the Guru, whom he now worshipped as a holy Divine.

Now it may be pointed out that Anandpur lay in the territory of Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur, one among several small Hill States, each under a feudal lord and paying tribute to the Mughal emperor. The Rajas, as we said in an earlier chapter, had no patriotic sense and looked to their own self-interest. The Mughal was to them as terrible as a bugbear was to the little boys. Also they had their mutual jealousies and suspicions and could not get together against the enemy of the

land. They would rather individually play up to him and thereby risk being at his mercy than join together, as self-respecting entities. Even when sometimes they realised or were made to realise their own slavery, they soon forgot about it. They ever vacillated between the will to fight for an honoured existence and the appeasement of the tyrant. They were the champions of reaction and were therefore highly inimical to the Guru who had demolished caste distinctions, attacked belief in gods and goddesses and challenged superstitious customs and usages. Free common kitchen, where all could sit and dine together, was for them an eye sore. But, above every other thing, they desired to retain their own power and privileges and the Guru seemed to them a potential danger, in that respect.

Bhim Chand considered himself the leader of the Hill Chiefs. He could not relish his own territory, employed for military exercises. The beating of the drum was another source of constant irritation to him. Yet, he knew that the Guru too had a large following of devoted Sikhs as also men from among both Hindus and Muslims. As their number was daily growing, it posed a serious challenge to his own rule. He had, however, the satisfaction that the emperor would be on his side if he started any action against the Guru. Also he believed, it was easy to incite him simply by circulating the story that the Guru was giving shelter to those dismissed or made homeless by the emperor. His mind was, therefore, constantly working in the direction of stopping the Guru from his activities.

Weak-kneed but shrewd Masands saw clearly that the

trouble was brewing. They got an opportunity to speak to the Guru's mother that he was incurring the displeasure of the Rajas as also of the Muslim rulers, and they would have to leave Anandpur, if the present activities were not stopped. The mother felt anxious and spoke to her son. He respectfully told her not to listen to the Masands. Growing fat on the offerings of the Sikhs, they had become cowardly and wanted nothing but life of ease and comfort, for themselves. He said, times had changed and he should be allowed to resist evil doers, if it had become necessary. He would not attack anybody but should be allowed to defend himself against an unprovoked attack. How could he remain in concealment for long, when things had already crossed all limits? How could a man of God remain a mere spectator, in the face of so much persecution, repression and exploitation? All evil doers and aggressors must, in such a situation, get their deserts and therefore sword should have to be met with sword. Peace at all costs was demoralising and always ended in a war of the bitterest dimensions. The mother was silenced and the Guru proceeded to prepare himself with greater vigour for defence against any attack from whichever quarter it came.

On the other side, Bhim Chand was seriously thinking of some strong action to stop the Guru from pursuing his military preparations. He had, however, a minister with a vision, who advised him to be patient with the Guru and make friendly contacts with him. An interview with the Guru was also arranged. But when the Raja saw the beautiful tent and the clever elephant, he was filled with jealousy. He made up his mind to employ all means, whether it be force or a strategem, to take

possession of, at least, the elephant. First, he requested that the same be lent to him on the occasion of his son's marriage, which actually took place very much later. The Guru knew that it was a deception, employed to deprive him of the elephant. Also it was an offering with a request that it was not to be parted with. So, the trick did not work and then it became, for the Raja, a matter of prestige, for, refusal meant defiance and this he was too proud to tolerate. He sent orders to the Guru to stop all his military adventures, disband his men and hand over to him the elephant and the tent, failing which he should prepare for war. The Guru could not be cowed down in that way and wrote back to say that he was fully prepared to measure sword with sword, if the same was forced on him. The conflict was, however, avoided for other considerations, though the Raja never made secret of his hostility to the Guru.

It is difficult to say positively, as to when the hostilities actually broke out. Bachittar Natak refers to the battles of Bhangani, Nadaun and Anandpur, but gives no dates. Historians and biographers also are not clear on this point and make conflicting statements. For the purposes of this book, dates do not matter much. We have given the events as accepted by most of the historians and which seem to be fairly correct. But let us first go back to other important developments that had already taken place.

Raja Medni Parkash of Nahan and Raja Fateh Shah of Siri Nagar had a long standing boundry dispute in which Fateh Shah was at fault. The latter had taken illegal possession of some territory of the former. The Raja of Nahan was sore about it and was in search of a powerful ally that would assist him in time of need. He was

advised to enlist the good will of the Guru whom he invited, soon after, to his place. The Guru accepted the invitation. Ram Rai, son of Guru Har Rai, was very close to Raja Fateh Shah. He advised him to make friends with the Guru and the advice was accepted. The Guru had a heart to heart talk with the Raja. He said, it was not right that the Rajas should destroy each other when they should be united against the domination of the Mughal. They should all throw off their fear and assist in the battle of Dharma that might have to be waged. The Raja was much impressed and ultimately his dispute with the Raja of Nahan was settled amicably, through the good offices of the Guru. Both the Rajas were completely reconciled, embraced each other and declared to live in friendship, in future. They also became friends and admirers of the Guru.

The Raja of Nahan offered an estate to the Guru and requested him to build for himself a fortress and shift his headquarters there. He thought, it would be an excellent plan for the security of his own State, besides winning the Guru's favour. The Guru agreed and the foundations of the fortress of Paonta, on the bank of Jamuna, were laid. Then he came over to the place, which he considered as ideal both for creative poetry and hunting excursions. Paonta became the centre of cultural activities, for which he and other litterateurs worked assiduously for as many as five years. 'Krishna-avtar' was completed by the Guru at this place in the year 1688 A. D. It means that probably no hostilities had broken out upto that year.

Ram Rai had settled for a long time in Dehra Dun and

had a following too. He had got offended with his father, Guru Har Rai, for denying him his so-called right to Guruship. But time was a great healer and he was now softened down so as to get reconciled with the Guru. Yet, he did not have the courage to meet him at Paonta. He was afraid that his followers would consider him weak if he himself took the initiative, and desired very much to meet the Guru at some neutral place. The Guru readily agreed and reconciliation was brought about. Guru Ram Dass had once correctly depicted the true Guru's grandeur, thus :

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨੋ ਜੇਹਾ ਕੋ ਇਛਦਾ ਤੇਹਾ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਵੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ
ਕਰਤਾ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਜਿਦੁੰ ਕਿਛੁ ਗੁਝਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ” ॥
ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥

“As is one's approach towards the true Guru, so is the fruit gathered from him. Nanak, the Creator knoweth the inner secrets of all. No one can hide his true self from Him.”

Guru Ram Dass in Gauri.

In Paonta, the Guru had a good time. Opportunities of sport and hunting were also enormous. Once, he killed a fierce tiger that had become a dread to the people. He did not employ a bullet or an arrow but only a sword and a shield, for this performance. Of course, it entailed great risk to life, but the Guru derived great pleasure from such risky adventures.

Saiyyad Budhu Shah, a Muslim saint of Sadhaura, a place in the neighbourhood of Paonta, was pleased to hear of the Guru's arrival there. Without having ever met him, he was his admirer, for, he was a man of God and sought holymen wherever he could find

them. He came to see the Guru to discuss with him such matters of religion as had not yet been resolved in his own mind. He was very much impressed with the clarifications the Guru gave him on many essentially religious matters. He also realised now why it had become necessary for the Guru to prepare himself against the Mughal regime and the reactionary social order of the time. He recommended the employment of five hundred Pathans, whom the emperor, Aurangzeb, had dismissed. Their leaders were Kale Khan, Haiyat Khan, Bhikhan Khan and Nijabat Khan. Saiyyad Budhu Shah's recommendation was accepted and the Pathans were employed.

Of the religious topics discussed with the Guru, the one on God-realisation needs a special mention. It shows how earnest-minded the Saiyyad was as a seeker. Here, we give briefly the gist of the Guru's reply on the subject. For a more detailed appreciation, the reader may refer to the chapter given at the end, dealing with the Guru's philosophy, expressed through his teachings. This is the gist of the Guru's reply ;

Each man is blessed with a soul that is potentially Divine and is capable of rising to great heights. It is an occult existence, behind the physical body and, in essence, is in the image of God. The obstacle in the way of realisation is the ego, created also by Him, against which it has to struggle for its fulfilment. If a man moves in a restricted orbit, it is due to the influence of this petty ego, the lower self. In ignorance, he employs his mind for fulfilling the desires of the body, as if the mind is the body's slave and not its master. He, thus, gets bound up by limitations and has

no idea of the limitless power lying hidden within him. He does not know that true happiness does not come from the material things he pursues, but in acquiring mastery over the self. Hatred, jealousy, fear, anger, lust and other passions spring from within the lower self and are the real cause of unhappiness. True freedom comes when one breaks the shackles of this self. When that happens, the consciousness is raised from the physical plane to the spiritual plane. True, there is the Divine spark in every heart but it has to be awakened through self-discipline and then accustomed to inward looking so as to become qualified for a vision of the Unseen Reality. Thus, it is the Ego that prevents the seeing of kinship that exists between the soul and God. It shuts out the knowledge of one's true self. Yet, prayer, repentance, association of good men and, above all, the love of the Name, open the inner eye to a new world of the spirit, purify the soul, invite His Grace and provide liberation. The soul comes back to its original Self and there is no sin, pain or suffering for it to be faced. Then it resides in the Divine Centre, i.e. in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is merging in the Divine Source, from Which it had emanated. The spark of fire gets lighted and reunited with the Fire. This briefly is God-realisation. Now to resume:

Ram Rai was not on good terms with his Masands. During one of his samadhis, they burnt him alive on the false plea that he was dead. His wife, Panjab Kaur, apprised the Guru of what had happened. He already knew that the Masands had become most corrupt. They practised oppression on the gullible Sikhs, in various forms, visited courtesans, embezzled offerings of the Sikhs, took intoxicants and committed

diverse crimes, involving moral turpitude. Here was an occasion to punish them suitably, so as to be a lesson for others of the same calling and having the same standard of morality. He sent fifty Sikhs including Nand Chand, Daya Ram and Mani Ram, for the purpose. Gurbaksh, the leader of the Masands, opposed them with two hundred armed men but he was defeated and his men ultimately surrendered.

Raja Fateh Shah's daughter was to be married to Ajmer Chand, son of Bhim Chand. The Raja invited the Guru on the occasion of this marriage. The Guru did not want to lose the friendship of the Raja but he also felt that he would incur Bhim Chand's displeasure, if he attended personally. Bhim Chand was openly jealous of the Guru's power, influence and prestige and talked freely of war. He had virtually declared it on the Guru already, though, it had not been given effect to, due to other considerations. There was thus a real danger of the marriage festivities being spoiled if the Guru attended. In view of these considerations, the Guru thought it prudent to send Nand Chand with hundred men to represent him and to present marriage gifts on his behalf. Now the marriage party had the shortest route to Sri Nagar, through Paonta. The Guru had no doubt about the evil intentions of Bhim Chand & the war was being deferred only. He was then encamping at Rajghat, a place from where the party could cross the Jamuna more conveniently. But this it could do only by coming to grips with the Guru's men and it was not the right time for the Raja, for that kind of adventure. Yet the bridegroom was required to reach earlier for some of the preliminary ceremonies. So, the Raja sent a messenger with a request for being

allowed to pass. The Guru was not prepared to oblige him, when he was sure that the request really concealed evil intentions behind. When the Raja realised that mere sweet words yielded no fruit, he sent his son, accompanied by a Brahmin, to make the same request, once again. The Guru knew that these people could not be relied upon, yet he thought it was not right to refuse the bridegroom. Also it was the best way to expose to the world the evil designs of the Raja. So he allowed the bridegroom to pass. The marriage party, however, chose some other route.

Bhim Chand and other Rajas resented very much the costly presents Nand Chand had made on behalf of the Guru and decided to attack and plunder the gifts. It showed the pettiness of their minds as also the hatred concealed behind. Yet, there it was. Fateh Shah was initially unwilling for any such action. But Bhim Chand was offended and his anger knew no bounds. He told Fateh Shah that if he stood in his way, his daughter would be abandoned and this was too much for him to resist. So ultimately, for the sake of his daughter, he yielded and joined them in the nefarious scheme of plundering the presents and destroying those who had brought them. It appeared to the Rajas as a really good plan to teach the Guru a lesson. But Nand Chand too was a shrewd man and sensed the danger. He had already been cautious and had encamped outside the city with a view to escape, if attacked. As soon as the treacherous plan of the Rajas was given effect to, Nand Chand and a handful of his brave men fought back and managed to reach Paonta to report to the Guru of what had happened.

The Rajas were very indignant over the humiliation

they suffered on the escape of Nand Chand. They held their council and decided upon war with immediate effect. Directing the bridegroom and the bride to proceed to Bilaspur, they marched forthwith to Paonta, to avenge themselves. They acted in anger and in a spirit of revenge and therefore acted foolishly and without adequate appreciation of the Guru's strength. They counted only on their numbers, ignoring the brave and sacrificing spirit of the opponent's army.

The Pathans recommended by Saiyyad Budhu Shah, were bribed by the Rajas and had joined them against their employer. Only Kale Khan, among them, with hundred men under him, remained loyal to the Guru. Udasi Sadhus had no stamina that came through inner strength. They were fed on the Guru's charity, loved ease and comfort and were cowardly too. How could people like these take risks that war involved ? So, all of them, except Sadhu Kirpal Dass, fled in the darkness of night. Raja Medni Parkash remained loyal and offered valuable gifts too, to the Guru.

Saiyyad Budhu Shah was much distressed at the desertion of the Pathans, recommended by him, for service in the Guru's army. Although he had made the recommendation in good faith, yet he felt small, in his own eyes, for having been tricked by the wily Pathans and wished very much to make suitable amends. He felt, it was the hour of need and he must do something for the Guru. So, he sent his four sons, two brothers and about seven hundred other trusted men to serve in the Guru's cause. Bhangani, a place four miles from Paonta, was chosen as strategically suitable to meet the enemy. The Guru started with a prayer that now forms the first

four lines of Akal Ustat. Here are the lines :

‘ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਰਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਦੀ ਰਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥
ਸਰਬ ਕਾਲ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਰਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਰਛਿਆ
ਹਮਨੈ’ ॥

‘May the Immortal Lord protect us ! May the All-Steel (God) give us Protection ! May we have the protection of All-Death ! May we have the protection of All-Steel !’

Although the Guru's men were recruited from the so-called low caste men, yet they had stamina and courage, born out of the newly acquired zeal to suffer for a righteous cause. They showed bravery, steadfastness and skill in arms, that surprised everybody. Many brave warriors fell. Both sides lost heavily. At exactly this critical hour, two wooden batteries, prepared by a carpenter Sikh, reached to re-assure the morale which was already quite high. The victory won was the cleanest and the Rajas fled. Budhu Shah lost two sons in the battle, but, like a truly brave man, he retained his mental calm. He told his wailing wife, Nasiran, that her sons were truly blessed and therefore there was nothing to grieve over. On the contrary, deaths suffered for good causes, bestowed eternal peace. She possessed a sincere and receptive heart and soon forgot her sorrows. In fact, she was converted into an admirer of the Guru and remained loyal and devoted upto the end of her life. Budhu Shah got the gift of the Name, besides a comb, a kirpan and the hair of the Guru, in appreciation of his unforgettable services to the great cause. After this victory, the Guru thought it prudent to abandon Paonta. So, he came back to Anandpur. Bhim Chand, on the advice of his minister, came to

meet the Guru so as to make peace with him. He over-flowed with warmth and courtesy. He expressed some very fine sentiments—the futility of war, the need to live in peace and the shame of one brother pushing the other brother into difficulties. He said, he had realised that war among themselves could do good to none except the rulers and that their past mistakes should be forgotten. The Guru told him, he was ever prepared for peace, if the desire behind it was genuine; in that case all forces could be marshalled to meet the real enemy of the land. Here are some words of wisdom, uttered once by Guru Ram Dass, to meet such situations :

“ਨਿਰਵੈਰੇ ਨਾਲਿ ਜਿ ਵੈਰ ਰਚਾਏ ਸਭੁ ਪਾਪੁ ਜਗਤੈ ਕਾ ਤਿਨਿ
ਸਿਰਿ ਲਇਆ ॥ ਜੋ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਰਣੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਉਹ ਆਵੈ ਤਾਂ ਪਿਛਲੇ
ਅਉਗੁਣ ਬਖਸਿ ਲਇਆ” ॥ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥

“Whosoever practiseth enmity with one devoid of enmity, carrieth the sins of the whole world over his head. Yet, if the refuge of the Guru, be honestly sought again, the all-loving Guru forgiveth past misdeeds”.

Guru Ram Dass in Gauri.

The Guru made his peace with the Raja, which meant peace with all the other Hill Rajas too, as also respite from war for some time.

But the Rajas could not be relied upon for all times. Also the Guru had in mind the bigger battles which, sooner or later, he might be called upon to fight, against the imperial forces. Aurangzeb's policy of distrust of Hindus and his cruel and bigoted behaviour in dealing with them, had alienated people from him, and they flocked to the Guru with their tales of woe and discontent. There were disgraceful stories of Hindu

women being forcibly removed and this had caused great resentment. The emperor was occupied in Deccan to quell disturbances there. Tana Shah of Hyderabad, had become a real headache for a long time. There was particularly acute discontent in the Panjab. Yet, the emperor had to fall back on the same province, for reinforcements and money and, in consequence, military strength of the state was much weakened. Revenue had remained unpaid for a long time. There was not, at the time, enough fear in the minds of the people to pay the same on demand. The Hill Rajas also had to pay large arrears of tribute and they evaded payments because they had exhausted their funds in internicine warfare. Yet, the emperor had to get money for his Deccan programmes. The local administrations had become quite impotent to control a situation in which the general trend was to evade payments, so far as possible. But some way had to be found.

The Guru, on his side, saw clearly what was coming and engaged himself during this respite to strengthen his own position. For putting up an effective defence against the possibility of heavy imperial attacks, four fortresses—Lohgarh, Anandgarh, Fateh Garh and Kes Garh—were built. The army was properly equipped and organised. By this time, Mian Khan, the Viceroy of Jammu, had received orders from the emperor to collect tribute from the Rajas, forthwith. Consequently he sent his commander-in-chief, Alif Khan, against Raja Kirpal Chand of Kangra and other Rajas of the adjoining states. Kirpal Chand was frightened. He paid the tribute and suggested that Bhim Chand, the top leader among the Rajas, should be dealt with, first. If he were brought to his knees, the task in respect of

others, would become comparatively easy. The suggestion was accepted and a force was despatched to Bilaspur with an ultimatum to the Raja to pay immediately, failing which he would be attacked and severely dealt with. The Raja was in rage at Kirpal Chand and quite justifiably too, for his mean, cowardly and treacherous behaviour. Also he had no money to pay. So, he was compelled to face the situation by putting up defence, to begin with. His people fought well, yet they could not be expected to hold on for long against heavy odds. In this predicament, the Raja was forced to approach the Guru for advice and help. The Guru knew that the man was an opportunist. He had been tried a number of times and found utterly selfish and unreliable. The Raja's Prime Minister, Parma Nand, a sweet tongued man, fell prostrate at the Guru's feet, assuring him of a future good behaviour and friendship, against the common enemy. The Guru always had that enemy in mind and was ever expecting to meet him. The united front proposal, therefore, appealed to him and he agreed. He sent Nand Chand with five hundred men forthwith to the battlefield of Nadaun, and it was followed by a personal visit. Kirpal Chand who had ranged himself with the imperial forces, was wounded in the battle, seriously. Also the Guru's arrow had killed a man, highly valued by Alif Khan, causing demoralisation in the ranks of his army. In this confusion, his men ran back, under the cover of night to save themselves. Bhim Chand won and felt grateful to the Guru's army for its timely assistance. Raja Kirpal Chand brought about reconciliation between Bhim Chand and himself and the Guru decided to return to Anandpur.

On the way back, the clansmen of Alsun village refused to sell supplies. The Guru ordered to use force and get supplies on payments, at the current rates. These clansmen had, on earlier occasions too, robbed and attacked Sikh pilgrims. The Guru's action had a salutary effect on other villagers too and the party reached Anandpur without any more trouble.

The defeat of Alif Khan was everywhere attributed to the help the Guru rendered to Bhim Chand. One, Dilawar Khan, who had built up power in Lahore, during Aurangzeb's absence, did not relish that the Guru should become so powerful as to defeat the imperial army. In fact, he feared the Guru's power, which, he thought, might someday destroy his own. So, he soon organised a campaign against the Guru, under the leadership of his own son. Anandpur was attacked, but the Guru won an easy victory, helped by the vagaries of Nature. Heavy rains swept off many men of the invading army and the rest fled, demoralised. Dilawar Khan was very much upset and decided on another adventure. This time, he sent his slave Hussain—a man notorious for his cruel and wicked nature—with a large army. On the way, he plundered several places and killed some of the Hill chieftains, that came his way. He wanted to create fear everywhere before he reached Anandpur. Some weak men in Anandpur were also frightened. They approached the Guru's mother, requesting her to use her influence with the Guru to force peace with the invader, at all costs. The Guru respectfully declined to listen to a proposal that had the effect of demoralising his men. How could a man destined to be the saviour of the land, from the clutches of a cruel regime, buy peace at all costs ?

Raja Gopal Chand of Guler was already frightened and was ready to make part payments. Kirpal Chand and some other Rajas, advised Hussain to arrest Gopal Chand and force full payment. On this advice, Hussain besieged the Guler fortress. As the Raja's men were short of both food and ammunition, he sent his minister to settle peace terms. He was given the assurance that if the Raja personally came to talk things over, he would not be molested. But his personal negotiations too did not bear fruit. He sensed that behind the fake of negotiations there were evil intentions of arresting him. He ran back home and requested the Guru to come to his aid or at least get him compromised with those who had, without any justification, joined the invader. The Guru sent Sangatia with some men to pull the Raja out of the mess created by some of the foolish people, in whose hands the destiny of millions of people lay. Finding that peace was not possible, the battle of Guler was fought in which Sangatia and his men died in the battle-field, fighting bravely. There was heavy loss of men on both sides. But ultimately Gopal won. Hussain was killed in the battle and as Raja Bhim Chand had already fled for his life, there was a complete rout of the invader. This battle really brought great disgrace to Dilawar Khan and his army. He had suffered an ignominious defeat, after which there was again respite for the Guru, for some more time.

Aurangzeb was distressed at the Panjab happenings and deputed Muazzam, his eldest son, to collect tribute from the Rajas and revenue from the people. The prince had a large imperial Force at his command and sent his trusted men for collection purposes. But

he did not molest the Guru, at all. His secretary, Bhai Nand Lal, about whom we will have more to say in the next chapter, was devoted to the Guru and exercised great influence over the prince. He told him that Anandpur was the only place in the country where all people, rich or poor, high or low, were treated equally, and, for that, the whole credit went to the Guru. It was therefore unholy to harass him and spoil the good work he was doing. He said, the Guru never entertained personal illwill against any, Then why should he be molested ? We may quote Guru Ram Dass on the subject of right human behaviour in situations like these :

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਭਨਾ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਮਨਾਇੰਦਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਦਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਕਿਉ ਹੋਇ” ॥
ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥

“The true Guru wisheth well of all, then why should any one wish ill of him’ ?

Guru Ram Dass in Gauri.

The prince was impressed and left the Guru alone. In fact, he sent some gifts too, as a token of his regards for the Guru's spiritual attainments. Aurangzeb was, however, displeased with his son for disobeying his orders and letting the Guru go with impunity. He had never liked his son for some of his ways and had kept him in prison too, for seven long years. Now he sent some of his trusted generals with a large army to deal with the Guru, but they too accepted the prince's lead in this regard. The Guru came out of every ordeal, unscathed. How literally apt is a statement of Guru Ram Dass again, in this connection, as given in Gauri :

“ਨਿਰਵੈਰਾ ਨਾਲਿ ਜਿ ਵੈਰ ਰਚਾਇੰਦੇ ਤਿਨ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਤਿਸਟਿਆ
ਨ ਕੋਇ” ॥ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥

“None of them, that bore enmity to the one, devoid of enmity, ever succeeded in his designs”.

After this, the Guru had a good breathing time again, and periods like these, he always utilised for constructive work, as we shall have occasion to examine in another chapter.

CHAPTER VII

The Guru's literary and Cultural interests.

‘ਅਕਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵੀਐ’ ॥

ਵਾਰ ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

“Let the Lord be served, through wisdom, on acquiring right intellect”,

Guru Nanak in Sarang

From the foregoing study, one can see that Guru Gobind Singh was truly a versatile genius. He was at once a seer, a philosopher, a spiritual preceptor, a social reformer, a hero, a patriot, a builder, a military genius, an organiser and, above all, a servant of humanity. But there is another aspect of his personality that needs a special mention. He was a profound scholar, a prolific writer, a poet of superb excellence, a prodigious linguist and a champion of arts. We have seen already that the desire to read, write and learn, had come upon him at an early age and this, in course of time, led him into depths of culture and insight of things. He, himself refers in Bachittar Natak to his early education in different spheres, as provided for him by his parents :

‘ਦੀਨੀ ਭਾਂਤ ਭਾਂਤ ਕੀ ਸਿਫਾ’ ॥

‘Education and training, in different fields, were provided for me’,

He had started to learn Hindi and Sanskrit in Patna, while Persian and Gurmukhi were taught to him in Anandpur. And, efficiency in Persian and Sanskrit, he acquired later, as he grew up and had retired to Paonta, in Nahan State. He possessed a poetic mind and a scholarly genius and therefore had produced a high class literature. Hindi poetry had reached new heights in his hands, his poems revealing a creative and original mind, having a keen insight into the kind of literature that ennobled and inspired. He could write with great vigour, warmth of feeling, breadth of humanity, high sensitivity and a seer's vision. The excellence of language and the elegance of diction, made his works highly artistic. He could employ several meters like Bhujang, Rasaval, Dohra, Tribhangi, Swaiyya, and chaupai etc. in the same poem, with the greatest ease. His writings covered a wide field, including several current topics and had a profound and telling effect on the minds of the people, because he had himself drunk deep at the fount of knowledge. It is quite true to say that Nature had combined in a single man the rarest and the finest qualities of both head and heart and made him a gifted and powerful writer. He had employed his mighty pen to prepare the highest type of literature that made fascinating reading for its spirit, sincerity and dialectical skill. Work of a creative kind had further sharpened his intellect and made him an intellectual giant.

He had a universal outlook and a deep passion for synthesis and integration, which manifested themselves in all his works. He wanted the future Indian culture to be a blend of different cultures. expressed through Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Hindi, Panjabi and other

languages and therefore he freely employed their vocabulary to express his ideas. Sanskrit, in particular, was considered as the repository of the finest aspects of Indian culture, history and traditions. He wished very much that his Sikhs learnt all languages to enrich their minds. He had realised, from the very start, that self-culture of the people was necessary and should be so oriented as to enable them to think correctly, without fear or prejudice, if they were to play an effective role in the days ahead. He believed it to be the pre-requisite for national reconstruction and social progress.

A Sikh once complained that his wife was under the spell of a Muslim and was thinking of embracing Islam. He told him to educate her, for only ignorant people believed in the evil influences of spells, charms or incantations.

He had no doubt that literature was vitally important as a moulder of men and as an instrument for progress and upliftment. He, therefore, maintained a large retinue of literateurs, with himself as the nucleus and the guiding star. He appreciated fine arts, patronised learning and honoured literary men who, on that account, flocked to him for the display of their talents. We find in the writings of a poet named Hans that he had received sixty thousand takkas as reward for translating the Karna Purva of Mahabhart. Fifty two bards were employed in his court, on permanent basis. They wrote on the familiar nine subjects accepted in poetry as good themes for the study of human character, viz, love (ਸਿੰਗਾਰ ਰਸ); pity (ਕਰੁਣਾ ਰਸ), anger (ਕਰੋਧ ਰਸ), mirth (ਹਾਸ ਰਸ), hate (ਬਿਰੋਧ ਰਸ), heroism (ਬੀਰ ਰਸ), wonder

(ਅਧਰੁਤ ਰਸ), terror (ਭਿਆਨ ਰਸ), and contentment (ਸਾਂਤ ਰਸ), The range, both in theme and style, was varied, wide and comprehensive. Thus, a prolific and eloquent variety of poetry was produced. It is said, that the weight of the manuscripts written by them was nine maunds and these manuscripts together were given the Name 'Vidya Sagar' i.e. the ocean of knowledge.

The Guru had engaged in his service a Sanskrit scholar, Pandit Raghunath, whose duty it was to teach Sanskrit to the Sikhs. He desired to turn them into scholars, besides making them saints and warriors. But the Pandit could not carry on his work for long, because he found that he was expected to teach all classes alike, irrespective of their castes or professions. He had been taught to believe that topics of religion were not meant for the Sudaras and that Vedas, Puranas and Shastras could not be made accessible to them, nor could they be taught their holy Sanskrit language, which was the language of the gods. He quite remembered the lesson he had learnt that molten lead, was to be put in the ears of both the teacher and the taught, which was prescribed by the Shastras as punishment for that kind of offence and he feared that high caste people would molest him for the unholy trade he was carrying on. So, he expressed his inability to serve in that capacity. The Guru welcomed the Brahmin's decision, for, he was already anxious that the monopoly of the priestly class, in respect of learning, should be wrested from it, for all time. Therefore he decided to send his Sikhs to Benaras for study, specially for acquiring efficiency in Sanskrit. Bir Singh, Karam Singh, Saina Singh, Ganda Singh and Ram Singh were the persons chosen for the purpose. They stayed in Benares for seven

years and returned fully conversant with Sanskrit lore, well qualified to translate classical works in Hindi. These learned Sikhs were called Nirmalas (the pure ones). The word Nirmala did not signify anything more than giving the scholars a recognition of the intellectual attainments they had achieved. Later on, when the Panth was created, the word Khalsa with the same connotation was employed as the epithet for every Sikh who had become exalted by taking Amrit. It was never intended that the Nirmalas should have a Nirmal Panth of their own. That, however, is a digression. The thing to be emphasised here is that the Guru keenly felt the need of sound education for a proper development of the Panth, and in fact, for every social change. He was himself the manliest of men and could inject manhood through right education, projected through his own writings. Choicest Sanskrit Works, and the ancient epics and classics, including Mahabharata, Ramayana and Puranas, describing the chivallorous deeds of heroes, were translated into Hindi, by him and his men, so as to instil bravery and heroism in the people. The literary works produced in his time and bequeathed to humanity, would continue to inspire men of all ages, just as they did in his own time. He had around him not only able but also fearless writers who did not hesitate to condemn and criticise wherever censure was due. Among his court poets was one, Bhai Nand Lal, a highly intellectual person, having the keenest understanding. But we propose to deal with him separately, at the close of the chapter, in view of his exceptional merit, deep intellect, intense feeling and other great qualities of head and heart. We have already referred to his offer for enlistment in the army.

But the Guru had told him to remain where he was, as he was better fitted to serve with his pen which was as much the need of the hour as the sword. The place of intellect, reason and understanding, as useful instruments for the advancement of human personality, had been well recognised by him and his predecessors. This, for instance, is what Guru Amar Dass had said :

“ਸੋ ਜਨੁ ਰਲਾਇਆ ਨ ਰਲੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ” ॥
ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥

“One, having sense of discrimination and right understanding is unequalled”.

Guru Amar Dass in Sri Rag.

Therefore it was, that for an extensive teaching in comparative theology, the Guru had created Damdama Sahib as the centre of research and study, even during the most critical period of his life. He produced scholars that could hold critical debates to meet successfully every challenge of reason.

But in spite of what has been said above, he knew that intellect, by itself alone, might not lead to much. Here is a line from Guru Nanak on this point :

“ਪੜਿਆ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਸੁ ਲਬੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰਾ” ॥
ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

“A learned man should be considered a fool, if he is governed by greed, pride and craving”.

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh.

Knowledge, according to him, meant enlightenment. The flame of spiritualism and freedom, should first be lighted to enable a man to know his true self. so that he could be drawn to truth spontaneously, and if need be, to fight, without being told, every domination—social, political,

religious or cultural. From the Guru's writings, whether on strictly religious topics or on the secular ones, the reader is sure to get not only the glimpses of the poet's deep philosophy, penetrating mind, detached judgement and deep thought but also spiritual enrichment. It is true, his Works throw a flood of light on various other topics, dealing with human affairs, also, yet underlying the divergent interests in study and knowledge, there lies a deep love of truth, service and freedom. It is these things that had shaped his own thoughts and actions, so that when the hour to act came, he was found ready, fully equipped to meet every challenge. No religion, he knew, could have any strength without them. We, therefore, find in his writings, first, a thorough condemnation of superstitions and shams of faith, in the most incisive yet humorous vein and, second, a stress on true values of life—in particular, the values of suffering and sacrifice for great and righteous causes. This is how he ridicules the so-called devotional and religious practices, without achieving enlightenment, through knowledge, in the above Divine sense :—

“ਨਾਚਤ ਫਿਰਤ ਮੋਰ ਬਾਦਰ ਕਰਤ ਘੋਰ ਦਾਮਨੀ ਅਨੇਕ ਭਾਉ
ਕਰਯੋਈ ਕਰਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਤੇ ਸੀਤਲ ਨ ਸੂਰਜ ਤੇ ਤਪਤ ਤੇਜ
ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਸੋ ਨ ਰਾਜਾ ਭਵ ਭੂਮਿ ਕੋ ਭਰਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਸਿਵ ਸੇ ਨ ਤਪਸੀ
ਆਦਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਸੇ ਨ ਬੇਦ ਚਾਰੀ ਸਨਤ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਸੀ ਤਮਸਯਾ ਨ
ਅਨਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਗਯਾਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਕਾਲ ਫਾਸ ਕੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਗਨ ਕੀ
ਚੌਕਰੀ ਫਿਰਾਇ ਈ ਫਿਰਤ ਹੈ” ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਟਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

“Peacocks go about dancing, the thunder roareth and the lightening produceth many flashes (refers to the roaming faqirs, indulging in mechanical practices). There is nothing colder than the moon and nothing

hotter than the sun (implying that God can not be realised through being hot or cold by the processes of austerities). If by possessing the worldly powers of a king, one could find Him, there is no king equal to Indra, who filleth the whole Universe. Nowhere can be found a penitent like Shiva, a reader of Vedas like the primal Brahma and a penitent like Santkumar (son of Brahma). Without Divine Knowledge, they are all subject to the noose of Death and ever wander through the cycle of ages'.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

A Sikh, once, told the Guru, that though he had abandoned worldly life, he had not attained peace. The Guru, offering him his felicitations, told him that he should learn to read and write. He also engaged a tutor for him. One day, the pupil was reading the line :

‘ਅਨੰਦੁ ਭਇਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ’ ॥

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘O mother, I am happy, for I have found the True Guru (God)’

Guru Amar Dass in Ram Kali.

From that day he stopped, coming for his tuition work. When asked to explain, he said, he had already gathered from his true Guru, divine Vision & consequent Wisdom and this was all that was required. We may quote from Guru Nanak also, in this connection :

‘ਨਾਨਕ ਲੇਖੈ ਇਕ ਗਲ ਹੋਰ ਹਉਮੈ ਝਖਣਾ ਝਾਖ’ ॥

ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘The divine Vision is the only thing that really matters, the rest is vexation of spirit’.

Guru Nanak in Asa,

The Guru was pleased and agreed with him that it was the study of divine knowledge or what may be called Enlightenment that had shown him the way to realisation.

Once, the musicians of the Guru's Durbar were singing the epic story of Hari Chand and the audience felt much inspired. A young Sikh objected to the recitation of anything except the Guru's Word, and quoted the line :

‘ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਚੀ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ’ ॥ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘Except the true Guru's Word, all word is false’.

Guru Amar Dass in Ram Kali.

The Guru told the young man to use his sense of discrimination that comes with enlightenment. He would, then, realise the spirit of the teaching, contained in the above line. The line meant that for guidance in life the Guru's Word alone was supreme and further only such readings were forbidden as created false values of things, and not those that had an inspiring moral.

It is thus clear that whereas the Guru extols knowledge as an instrument of progress, he values enlightenment and divine Vision above everything else. He goes further and wants service, knowledge, faith and devotion brought together, in one organic synthesis. He does not want Gyan, Bhakti and Knowledge to be treated as distinct paths that can lead to Moksh (liberation), exclusively of each other. All of them should go together in a harmonious blend, otherwise human personality would remain incomplete. He believed that the most desirable thing was the development of a complete human personality. Neither intellectualism divorced from

faith and action, nor faith detached from reason was a wholesome thing for an integrated growth. The following lines on the subject should be noted:—

‘ਗਯਾਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਮਹਾਂ ਦਾਨਿ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਹੁਜੈ ਲੀਨ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਬਿਹੀਨ
ਦੀਨ ਕੈਸੈ ਕੈ ਤਰਤ ਹੈ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Without divine Knowledge and the love of and faith in the Great Giver, how can an ignorant man cross the sea of life?’

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

The line stresses the point that Knowledge, Love and Faith are all necessary for harmony in life. Here is another hymn emphasising the value of faith as much as of knowledge.

‘ਪੰਚ ਬਾਰ ਗੀਦਰ ਪੁਕਾਰੈਂ ਪਰੇ ਸੀਤਕਾਲ ਕੁੰਦਰ ਔ ਗਦਹਾ ਅਨੇਕਦਾ
ਪੁਕਾਰਹੀ ॥ ਕਹਾਂ ਭਇਓ ਜੋ ਪੈ ਕਲਵਤ੍ਰ ਲੀਉ ਕਾਂਸੀ ਬੀਚ ਚੀਰ ਚੀਰ
ਚੋਰਟਾ ਕੁਠਾਰਨ ਸੋ ਮਾਰਹੀ ॥ ਕਹਾਂ ਭਇਓ ਫਾਂਸੀ ਡਾਰ ਬੂਡਯੋ ਜੜ੍ਹ
ਗੰਗਧਾਰ ਡਾਰ ਡਾਰ ਫਾਂਸਿ ਠਗ ਮਾਰ ਮਾਰ ਡਾਰਹੀ ॥ ਬੂਡੇ ਨਰਕਧਾਰ
ਮੂੜ੍ਹ ਗਯਾਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਨਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਕੈਸੇ ਗਯਾਨ ਕੋ
ਬਿਚਾਰਹੀ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘The Jackal barketh five times in cold season (refers to the five Muslim prayers). The elephant and donkeys do it still better, for they utter cries many times. What good cutting oneself in twain by the saw at Kanshi? Do not thieves cut men in pieces and kill them with their axes? What availeth it if a fool hath put a halter round his neck and drowneth himself in the Ganges? Do not robbers put men to death in a most ruthless manner? Without divine knowledge, true wisdom and faith, men remain fools, drowning themselves in the river of Hell’.

(Akal Ustat)

The perfect and the happiest man is therefore he who serves out of love and faith and combines in himself the moral, the intellectual and the spiritual aspects of human personality.

We shall close this chapter with a short note on Bhai Nand Lal, one of the most outstanding Court poets of the Guru. He was a great Persian and Arabic scholar. During his early days, his father, a Khatri, had sent him to a Bairagi, whose disciple he became, in course of time. The Bairagi wanted to invest him with a wooden necklace, as a symbol of the Bairag religion. But Nand Lal could not understand what meaning the necklace had for him and so left the man quietly off. Later, he was with Aurangzeb for sometime, as the secretary of his son, Muazzim. Sensing that the emperor wanted to convert him, as he had already converted so many other poets and scholars of the period, he escaped with his disciple, Gyassuddin, to Anandpur. So many other talented men of intellectual attainments had similarly taken refuge with the Guru, as the bigot would not tolerate that any non-muslim should have a reputation for learning and scholarship. Bhai Nand Lal was also an eye-sore to him. It is said that a verse in Quran which defied correct interpretation by the Muslim divines, was interpreted by Nand Lal to the entire satisfaction of all. On that account, his reputation for scholarship and learning had increased much, but the emperor would tolerate it only, if Nand Lal turned a Muslim. When the poet met the Guru, his doubts were resolved and he became his disciple. He came to have, in course of time, deep reverence for the Guru and it always gave him unbounded pleasure to sing

his praises in loving adoration. Here is just an illustration :

“ਹਰ ਦੋ ਆਲਮ ਕੀਮਤੇ ਯਕ ਤਾਰ ਮੂਏ ਯਾਰੇ ਮਾ” ॥

“Both this and the next worlds do not equal a single hair of my beloved (Guru Gobind Singh)”.

He wrote a number of books in praise of his Master as also to expound his philosophy. Among them, ‘Bandginama’ (the book of worship) was made an offering of, at the Guru’s feet. The Guru lovingly changed its name from ‘Bandginama’ to ‘Zindginama’ (the book of life). He was very much pleased with Nand Lal for his humility and selfless service. He was once inspecting, in disguise, some kitchens that were being run by important Sikhs, on their own initiative, as a service of love. He found that the one run by Nand Lal served most efficiently and in a truly devotional spirit and at all hours, meeting the needs of pilgrims coming to it. Others were doing it without the necessary touch of humanity, which the free kitchens were intended to foster. The Guru was so pleased with his performance in the service of food that he spoke to the Sikhs in the morning congregation of his personal experience about it. He emphasised the point that service ennobled the soul if it were done in a spirit of worship i.e. if it were surrendered to Him in a devotional spirit. He said, kitchens should be considered as laboratories where service practised as a daily routine would prepare, in the long run, for service of humanity as a whole, for, service rendered to the needy was service rendered to God or to the Guru :

‘ਗਰੀਬ ਕਾ ਮੂੰਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਗੋਲਕ’ ॥

“The mouth of the poor is the Guru’s receptacle (What is given to the poor goes to the Guru)”.

Also service rendered in the kitchen entailed some manual labour and this was most valuable in the building of spiritual stature. For instance, sweeping the floor and cleaning utensils, in the Guru’s kitchen, inculcated humility and unassuming devotion to work, besides providing engagement for the mind and the senses.

CHAPTER VIII

The Guru's marriages.

“ਏਕਾ ਨਾਰੀ ਜਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਧੀ ਭੈਣ ਵਖਾਣੈ” ॥

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ॥

“One who hath one wife of his own and regardeth every other person's wife, as a sister or a daughter, is a true continent”.

Var Bhai Gurdas.

We have reached a stage in the study of the Guru's life where it seems proper to be adequately informed about his marriages, so as to be able to look at the matter in the right perspective, otherwise there is the danger of rushing into conclusions that may be wholly unwarranted. While hostile critics may be tempted to find in it sufficient grist to grind their own mills, others may feel embarrassed at the suggestion that the Guru had two or three wives and still others may draw hasty inferences on the question of marriage, in general. If the accounts on the subject by different writers were studied with care, one would find at once conflicting and divergent statements that only befogged, without leading anywhere. Some of the writers say. he had three wives and others that he had two. Those who agree on the number, differ among

themselves over so many other things—the date or the year of the marriage, the name of the wife's father, the place of his residence and so on.

We may examine the first view, first—the view that the Guru had three wives.

Regarding the first marriage it is generally agreed that it had taken place on 23rd Haar, Sambet 1734, though, a few writers fix the date of this marriage as 15th Jeth 1730 i.e. at a time when the Guru was only seven years old and his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was there to guide and take decisions on his own responsibility. On the face of it, it seems most improbable that this wide-awake father should have allowed the marriage of his son at that age. The position in 1734 had, however, changed, the father, having gone to his Eternal Home, on courting martyrdom. The son had, then, been installed on the Gaddi as Guru, but he had a mother in Mata Gujri, who exercised great influence over him. He adored her not merely because she was his mother but also because she was a saint and had acquired a very high spiritual stature. On that account, she was often able to persuade her son to agree to things that he would otherwise avoid. The Guru has recognised the fact of her high spiritual eminence, in his Bachittar Natak, thus :

“ਤਾਤ ਮਾਤ ਮੁਰ ਅਲਖ ਅਰਾਧਾ ॥ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਯੋਗ ਸਾਧਨਾ ਸਾਧਾ ॥
ਤਿਨ ਜੋ ਕਰੀ ਅਲਖ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਭਏ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਗੁਰਦੇਵਾ ॥”

“My father and my mother both, meditated on the incomprehensible Lord and practised Yoga (Union with Him). On account of their devoted service to the Lord, the Divine Master was pleased with them”.

It is an historical fact that she had, along with her husband, spent in Baba Bakala, twenty years on meditations. The Yoga she had practised was the Yoga of self-control and of Union with the Supreme, through the meditations of the Name. It had nothing to do with any yogic practices of self-mortification or rigorous austerities of an unnatural kind, though practices for the concentration of the mind need not be ruled out. The spiritual effort she had made, then, had produced equipoise and there was visible, on her face, serenity and composure, reflecting the peace prevailing in her soul. The young Guru knew all this and therefore accepted her advice, sometimes even against his own best judgement and will. This fact should always be kept in view in an appraisal of the Guru's action regarding a matter in which the mother was interested, as in the present case.

And this is how the marriage came about : A Sikh named Bhikhia (Harjas, according to some writers) visited Anandpur as so many Sikhs of the time frequently did, to pay homage to the Guru. He made an offer of his daughter, Jitoji, to the mother, for marriage with the young Guru. As the girl was highly accomplished and quite suitable as a match, the mother was happy over the offer. She approached her brother, Kirpal Chand, urging on him to advise the Guru to accept the offer. And the Guru agreed, clearly in deference to the wishes of both his mother and his maternal uncle, for whom he had the greatest respect. From the above, it seems quite reasonable to suppose that Sambat 1734 was the year of the first marriage with Jitoji, as stated by most writers.

Regarding the alleged second marriage, it is mostly

agreed that it had taken place in Sambat 1741 though there are some writers who hold that it took place a year or two after the first marriage. The bride was Sundri, the daughter of a Sikh, named Sri Ram Saran (no name given by many others, including Macauliffe, who was assisted in his accounts by some Sikh divines and scholars). The writers say that the Guru did not desire the alliance but he was again pressed by the mother to agree.

It is not out of place to point out here that according to some writers, the Guru's first marriage did not bear fruit, in the form of a child and on that account the mother prevailed upon the Guru to marry a second time. This view seems to be quite far-fetched and unsustainable as the Guru was only 18 years old and Jitoji even younger in Sambat 1741 when the second marriage is said to have taken place. Surely, that is not the age to declare any woman as barren.

About the alleged third marriage there are again conflicting versions about the date and year of marriage (1760 according to some and 1757 according to others). A Sikh named Ramu (no name given in some accounts) of Rohtas in Jehlum District came along with other devotees from the North of Panjab, with their offerings for the Guru. He brought his daughter, Sahib Devi, in a Palki and offered her for being wed to the Guru. The Guru declined the offer, saying that he had completely relinquished family life as he was occupied with great tasks requiring his constant attention. Ramu was much disappointed and felt most unhappy. He said, he had dedicated her to him long ago and people all over the place knew about the dedication and even

addressed her as their mother. If the Guru refused to accept her at that stage, no one else would wed her and if she remained single, the reputation of the family as also of the girl would suffer. He, therefore, requested that Sahib Devi might be allowed to stay with him, merely to serve him and his causes. The Guru agreed on the clear and express understanding that she would be in his house for the service and love of the Sikh Sangats, whom she would consider as her own children. She was to be there as his wife not in any physical sense but as the spiritual mother of the Khalsa and for her own spiritual upliftment, in the spiritual companionship of her spiritual husband. All concerned had agreed on this novel experiment and the marriage was solemnised.

At the outset, it is easy to see that historians are not adequately informed about the year of this marriage. As they all recognise the fact that Sahib Devi was the spiritual mother of the Khalsa, it must be she who, as the spiritual mother should have poured patashas (sweets) in the nectar the Guru had prepared. Now all are agreed that the nectar ceremony was performed for the first time on the 1st of Baisakh Sambat 1756. How could, then, she be there during the Amrit ceremony as the spiritual mother if her marriage had taken place in 1757 or 1760, as historians claim? Macauliffe says, perhaps to overcome this difficulty, that patashas were poured into the nectar by Mata Jitoji. But he has in this way created another difficulty. No one has ever claimed that Jitoji was the spiritual mother of the Khalsa. The conclusion is, therefore, irresistible that the marriage with Sahib Devi must have come off before the founding of the Khalsa.

Brotherhood.

We may now state the points of view of those writers also who claim that the Guru had two wives.

First, there are those who hold that the second marriage with Sundri had taken place after Jitoji had died and therefore no body, not even the Guru, could have reasonably objected to a re-marriage. But this is evidently not a correct view, as it is generally agreed that it was Jitoji who had borne Jujhar Singh, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, while Sundri had borne only Ajit Singh who was also the eldest child.

Second, there is a school of research scholars that holds that Jitoji and Sundri were two names of the same person. The word Sundri means beautiful and this name was adopted as an epithet of Jitoji, in accordance with the usual practice of giving a new name to a newly wed bride at her in-laws house. This practice was being followed even today in some families, so that the parents of the girl concerned continued to address her by her earlier name while the in-laws called her by her changed name. The same thing, they assert, had happened with Jitoji, who began to be addressed as Sundri at her in-laws, and in course of time confusion arose somehow that Jitoji and Sundri were the names of two different wives of the Guru. This confusion, according to them could have arisen by another possibility. The betrothal ceremony of the Guru's alliance with Jitoji was celebrated with as much ceremonial festivities as the regular marriage, at a later date. This might have suggested to the unwary that perhaps two marriages had taken place, particularly because it was not unusual, in those days, to have more

marriages than one. The wrong impression, thus created, might have gone on for a long time and in the absence of authentic record, got confirmed with the passage of time.

Let us now pause and think over all that has been said above. From the confusing and contradictory statements of writers, it is not possible for any one to claim the last word on the subject. But there are certain conclusions which stand out conspicuously. First, the marriage with Sahib Devi (she became Sahib Kaur after the Amrit ceremony), as every one admits, had taken place in an altogether different context and sense. Sahib Kaur had agreed to be the spiritual mother of the Khalsa and was the Guru's wife only in that holy context. She had agreed to share with her Guru-husband the spiritual comradeship in a life of married celibacy. In this spiritual union there could be nothing sensual or physical. She proved to the world by her rare example that, given sufficient self-control, home ties might not be snapped in the pursuit of spiritual advancement, as these ties did not necessarily hinder the mind's development. She became an example of self-denial and a symbol of true love between husband and wife. It was really the unique case of the union of two great souls in a bond of divine love. Not that her view of married life had suffered any change or was a departure from the accepted Sikh view. Sikhism had never subscribed to the unholy view that married life was something despicable and sex satisfaction an evil. Sex instinct was a natural phenomenon and was never to be thought of in terms of its complete annihilation. It was rather to be treated as something holy and sanctified. It possessed a great potency and so to

exercise unnatural repression was injurious for physical, moral and spiritual growth. She knew all this but the urge to serve the Guru and his causes had taken a firmer hold of her. She was no ordinary woman and we must not judge her action in this regard by ordinary standards. She had chosen the path of service and self-denial with open eyes and the Guru had entered into her soul and blessed her. She wanted to forget sex and other physical pleasures of a physical union and merge in the Guru, through a devoted and wholehearted service in the causes he espoused. The sex was to be sublimated and channelised in healthful directions. The Guru had proper assessment of her spiritual stature, when he ultimately agreed to the marriage. He considered her as most eminently fitted to become the spiritual mother of the Khalsa. She deserved this epithet richly, by deliberately choosing for herself the path of sacrifice and self-denial. If the spiritual father of the Khalsa had won that honour through self-effacement of the highest order, the same must be true of the spiritual mother. She had willingly chosen the hard path to deserve that honour. She should therefore never be looked upon as a woman or measured in terms of her sex but as a devotee of the Guru, just as there were so many other devotees both men and women, who were ever ready to make any sacrifice for his sake. We cannot imagine, in this age of scepticism and want of religious faith, the type of romanticism that existed, then. Sons and daughters were dedicated to the Guru's causes from their births and were presented to him as offerings, when they became of age. It gave the devotees the greatest pleasure if their children were accepted at all, as offerings. And when these children died for the

Guru, there were rejoicings in the family and thanksgiving to God.

Now we come to the second conclusion, which also is equally difficult to resist. The fact that the Guru married Sahib Kaur under the most rigid conditions lends colour to the view that he could not have agreed to a second marriage with Sundri, when he already had a wife in Jitoji. A man of his stature could not have applied one standard in one case and quite the opposite in the other. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that either Jitoji and Sundriji were one as claimed by some writers or there has been some confusion somewhere else, which may not be easy to straighten out at this stage. Of course, the Guru was an idealist in his outlook and believed that marriage was a sacrament. Therefore he could not have countenanced the idea of a second marriage in the life time of his first wife.

But when all is said and done, it is still not possible for anyone to rule out altogether the possibility of the Guru yielding to the pressure of circumstances. We have seen already that there were so many other factors that could not be easily brushed aside. He had to subordinate sometimes his personal inclinations to the wishes of his great mother and his revered and brave uncle, Kirpal chand. It is true he was the Guru of his people but in so far as mundane matters were concerned, he had to accept, sometimes, the wishes of the family. Also the romantic type of love that existed between him and his Sikhs was another factor. The devotees cherished him as their spiritual leader and loved to make offerings of sons and daughters, to be employed in any way he desired. It was not easy to

refuse the requests of devoted men, when these requests had emerged out of superb devotional aspirations. How could human factor be altogether eliminated and this over an issue which admitted of a less rigid attitude ? After all, exceptions on the question of marriage could not be ruled out, even though, as a rule, monogamy, was accepted as the right thing, thus :—

“ਏਕਾ ਨਾਰੀ ਜਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਧੀ ਭੈਣ ਵਖਾਣੈ” ॥

“One who hath one wife of his own and regardeth every other person's wife, as a sister or a daughter, is a true continent”.

Ordinary rules of morality are not always sufficient to cover all situations on the social plane and therefore exceptions have to be made in special circumstances. In civilised societies, different customs prevail having different moral bases. Some societies insist on purdah as quite necessary, while others consider it as a sign of disrespect to women. Countries, having abnormally large population of women, might allow polygamy as a good remedy against adultery, while others having no woman-problem to tackle, might consider the same as a sin or a thing injurious to the health and well-being of its people. Social morality had often changed with time and then old value-judgements disappeared, being replaced by new ones. Daropti had five husbands and there was nothing wrong about polyandry, at that time. She was rather treated with respect for her purity and steadfastness. India, itself, has been the land of polygamous marriages for a long time, including the period of the Sikh Gurus.

Swami Vivekanand was in Tibet once. He was shocked

to learn that polyandry was freely practised and propagated in that land. He expressed to the Tibetans his horror at the hideous custom prevailing among them. They replied : "Indians are selfish people, otherwise why should a man keep a woman entirely to himself". Even in advanced societies occasions do arise when exceptions in the exercise of principles become an imperative duty. It was the consciousness of the possibility of covering such situations arising in the lives of the seers, including the Gurus' lives, that Guru Nanak had said :

‘ਗੁਰ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਾ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਕਾਹੇ ਧਾਵਹੁ’ ॥

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘Act on the Guru's Word. There is no need to ape his actions blindly’.

Guru Nanak in Ramkali.

Actions can be misleading because they are related to time and space. They may appear even contradictory, sometimes.

Polygamy becomes an evil when sex motive or sex indulgence is its basis. The world knows that no man could have greater control over physical desires as the Guru had. He was a Yogi for whom the life of the spirit was the only thing that had value. He was the man who could sacrifice his all for the love of God and man. We may refer here to his views, injunctions and writings on the subject of uncontrolled lust and other passions to give the reader a correct image of this great man and thus help him to look at the subject under review in the right perspective. The following observations may be noted :—

1. The Guru often spoke to his Sikhs thus : 'Love your own wife and be devoted to her alone. Do not share another woman's bed, even in a dream. as love of this kind is like a dagger that destroys'.

Here is a popular quotation :

“ਆਪਨ ਨਾਰੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਨੇਹੁ ਤੁਮ ਨਿਤ ਬਢਹੀਉ ॥ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਕੋ
ਸੰਗਿ ਭੂਲ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਹੂੰ ਨ ਜਈਉ” ॥

'Love your own wife more and more. Do not share the bed of another's wife, even in a dream'.

2. Banda Bairagi was sent by the Guru to the Panjab to continue the work, left unfinished by him there. One of the special instructions to him, at departure, was that he should remain continent, as otherwise his courage, glory and influence, were likely to depart. It was, he said, the continent person, engaged in a superb work of this kind who won the battles of life, as were to be faced by him.

3. The Guru was in Rawalsar when he received a letter from Padmani, the daughter of the Raja of Chamba. The letter was in the form of a riddle to be unfolded by him for her benefit. The Guru replied most suitably and she was so pleased with it that she persuaded her father to let her go to see the man. The Guru patted her shoulder with his arrow as a mark of compliment for her intelligence. She respectfully pointed out that as she had become his devotee, she expected from him a pat on the back with his hand. He replied, he had never touched any woman except his own wife.

4. A Muslim lady fell in the hands of Sikh soldiers during the course of war. She was proceeding on

her way in a palki when some of them intercepted the bearers and directed them to take the palki to the place where the Guru was. The first question that the Guru put to his men was whether any person had molested or ill treated the lady in any way. But such an eventuality could not have arisen. His injunctions to his Sikhs in respect of women were so categorical that they had not even looked at her face that had remained covered with a purdah.

Some weak minded Sikhs had, once, suggested that since Muslims often carried away Hindu women forcibly and maltreated them, retaliation against them was justified. The Guru condemned such irresponsible talk. He had particularly warned against adultery with a Muslim woman, familiarly expressed as companionship of Turkish woman (ਤੁਰਕੀ ਕੀ ਸੰਗਤ). There was need for such a warning in the context of the prevailing bitterness which the Muslim hooligans had engendered in dealing with non-muslim women.

5. Once, the wife of a Brahmin of Hoshiarpur had been forcibly taken away by Jabbar Khan, a Pathan of Bassi. The Brahmin was in deep distress and went from one official to the other for help. But no one cared to enter into his lacerated heart. At last, he came to seek the shelter of the Guru who immediately sent his own son, Ajit Singh, for the rescue work. The Prince fell upon the Pathan like a tiger, rescued the Brahmin's wife and restored her to him. The Pathan was captured and punished suitably. The promptness with which the thing was done, was a measure of the special concern the Sikhs were taught to have for the sanctity of womanhood.

Finally, we give here some of the utterances of the Guru on the control of the mind as the absolute minimum for self-realisation. It means men must strive to be pure in thought and action, for achieving human fulfilment. Here are the utterances :

‘ਅਪਨੋ ਮਨ ਕਰ ਮੋਂ ਜਿਹ ਆਨਾ । ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੋ ਤਿਨੇ ਪਛਾਣਾ’ ॥

ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Only he who controlleth his own mind, realiseth the Supreme Being’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

Again :—

‘ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਜਿਤੇ ਜਗ ਕਰਹੀ ॥ ਨਰਕ ਕੁੰਡ ਭੀਤਰ ਤੇ ਪਰਹੀ ॥

ਹਾਥਿ ਹਿਲਾਏ ਸੁਰਗ ਨ ਜਾਹੂ ॥ ਜੋ ਮਨ ਜੀਤ ਸਕਾ ਨਹਿ ਕਾਹੂ’ ॥

ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘The world engageth itself in fruitless rituals and falleth in the pit of hell. By waving of hands (i.e. through ceremonial worship) merely, none goeth to Heavens, unless the mind is first controlled’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

The following hymns may be noted for their emphasis on the control of lust and other passions :

‘ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਲੋਭ ਹਠ ਮੋਹ ਨ ਮਨ ਸੋ ਲਯਾਵੈ ॥

ਤਬ ਹੀ ਆਤਮ ਤਤ ਕੋ ਦਰਸੈ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਹਿ ਪਾਵੈ’ ॥

ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Seek not in thy heart lust, wrath, covetousness, obstinacy and attachment. Only then, thou shalt behold the Supreme Essence of the world and meet the Lord’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Shabad Hazare.

Again :—

‘ਅੰਗਨਾ ਅਧੀਨ ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ ਏਕ ਗਯਾਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਛੀਨ
ਕੈਸੇ ਕੇ ਤਰਤ ਹੈ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘How shall the poor wretch, subject to women, and devoted to lust and wrath, be saved without the divine Knowledge of the One Lord’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

Again :

‘ਕਾਮਨਾ ਅਧੀਨ ਸਦਾ ਦਾਮਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ ਏਕ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਕੈਸੇ ਪਾਵੈ
ਜਗਦੀਸ ਕੋ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘How can he who is the slave of desire or is in the hold of wealth meet the Lord of the world, without faith in Him’ ?

Guru Gobiad Singh in Akal Ustat.

And lastly :

“ਰੇ ਮਨ ਇਹ ਬਿਧ ਜੋਗ ਕਮਾਵਉ ॥ ਸਿੰਛੀ ਸਾਚ ਅਕਪਟ ਕੰਠਲਾ
ਧਯਾਨ ਬਿਭੂਤ ਚੜ੍ਹਾਓ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਤਾਤੀ ਗਹੁ ਆਤਮ ਬਸਿ ਕਰ
ਕੀ ਭਿਛਿਆ ਨਾਮ ਅਧਾਰੰ ॥ ਬਾਜੈ ਪਰਮ ਤਾਰ ਤਤ ਹਰਿ ਕੋ
ਉਪਜੈ ਰਾਗ ਰਸਾਰੰ ॥ ਉਘਟੈ ਤਾਨ ਤਰੰਗ ਰੰਗ ਅਤਿ ਗਯਾਨ ਗੀਤ
ਬੰਧਾਨੰ ॥ ਚਕਿ ਚਕਿ ਰਹੈ ਦੇਵ ਦਾਨਵ ਮੁਨਿ ਛਕਿ ਛਕਿ ਬਯੋਮ
ਬਿਵਾਨੰ ॥ ਆਤਮ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਭੇਸ ਸੰਜਮ ਕੋ ਜਾਪ ਸੁ ਅਜਪਾ ਜਾਪੈ ॥
ਸਦਾ ਰਹੈ ਕੰਚਨ ਸੀ ਕਾਇਆ ਕਾਲ ਨ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਬਯਾਪੈ” ॥
ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਜਾਰੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

“O my mind, practise Yoga in this way : Let truth be thy horn, sincere heart thy necklace, meditations the ashes on the body, restraint of the self thy lyre and support of the Name thine alms. Let the Primal Essence be thy playing on the strings so that thou hearest God's Sweet Music. By the practice of the

songs of Divine Knowledge, waves of melody and bliss would be produced; the demons and the gods in their heavenly chariots would be astonished and munis would be intoxicated with delight to hear them. Let thy mind be admonished, the garb of self-restraint be worn and God's Name uttered with thy heart. It is in this way only that thy body becometh pure like gold and Death approacheth not thee".

Guru Gobind Singh in Shabad Hazare.

CHAPTER IX

The Call

“ਜਾਇ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੈਂ ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਇ” ॥ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥
‘Go & spread Dharma in the world’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

Every reflecting person is, at some period of his life, assailed by questions : Who am I ? What is the purpose of my being in this world ? What is the right direction my life should take so as to become happy ? Leaving the metaphysical aspects of these questions apart, every man knows that the present is a reality and he must face it. When he comes in contact with others, he finds at once that they are as much motivated by self-interest as he himself is. This makes him realise that it is not possible for him to have things entirely his own way, without creating conflict and strife. In this way, he becomes conscious of his own limitations. If he is honest, he will realise that he cannot build his life on self-interest and there is no choice for him but to accept all human beings as equal, having equal rights to enjoy what Nature gives in abundance. The maxim ‘do unto others what thou wishest others to do unto thee’, or ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself’ or ‘all human beings are His Children’ has

dawned on him because of this realisation, whether he likes its implications or not. All the same, he comes to feel that all men are members of one human race and their common future depends on their ability to live together rationally, i.e, in harmony and concord. He who refuses to accept this basic fact of life will find life haunted by misery and unhappiness even though in God's Scheme of things, peace, joy and happiness are his natural inheritance. And, he will ever remain in the clutches of anger, avarice, wrath, jealousy and hate and, in consequence damn himself. It is quite true to say that no one can remain at peace with oneself and one's surroundings, unless this basic fact is, first recognised.

Prophets, Gurus and seers also accept this basic fact, although their approach is entirely different. They do not think in physical terms, they rise above the physical plane and talk in spiritual terms. For them, there is, above the visible order, the Unseen and the Eternal Order. The whole of the visible order perishes but the Unseen Order abides and so it is this latter Order that must engage primary attention. In other words, it is the life of the spirit that should really matter otherwise human society would become a chaos a scene of hate and strife. Have not men, women, children, cities and works of art, been exterminated wholesale, without that kind of life ? It is true that poverty, disease and ignorance have to be combated on the physical plane but they are not the major cause of man's decline. Unless the soul is cultivated and faith in spiritual ideals is maintained, nothing else is of much value. The world remains dominated by greed of wealth, passion for power and pride in the things

material. It pursues the petty and the passing and becomes slave to matter—the beauty and the grandeur of the spirit remains in veil. The spectacle of people morally depraved is a familiar phenomenon. Exploitation in various forms, corrupt practices, black marketing and hoarding, are the natural result of a dwindling respect for moral values, which can be disregarded only at a very heavy cost. No social order, however well-meant, can survive for any length of time if moral and spiritual values are at a discount. Thus, the basic fact, again, is that love for power, pelf, position, wealth or worldly influence creates false values of things which must inevitably result in disaster for the individual as also for the society. It is on account of this that man instinctively hungers for the spirit of religion, whether he knows it or not. It is true, his self-interest often leads him astray. Yet, in the inmost recesses of his heart, he knows that without that spirit he is incomplete. Guru Nanak says :

“ਭੁਖਿਆਂ ਭੁਖ ਨ ਉਤਰੀ ਜੇ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੁਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਰ” ॥
ਜਪੁਜੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ॥

“The hungry souls are not satiated, even if loads of the material things of the world are possessed’.

Guru Nanak in Japji.

It means, men will continue to crave for the right vision and for the sustenance of religious life, not merely because their physical or emotional needs have to be met but really because the soul dies out without them. Guru Nanak puts the same idea, thus :

‘ਸੋ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਜੀਵੈ
ਕੋਇ ॥ ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਥੀ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਸਭ ਹਰਾਮ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ’ ॥
ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘The person in whose heart God dwells, lives truly, Nanak, others do not live. But if they do live, it is a dishonoured existence and all that they enjoy is impure’.

Guru Nanak in Var Manjh.

God is a moral, an ethical and a spiritual being and so is the soul, in its original purity, for God created man in His Own image. If God is Truth, Love and Freedom, so is the soul and therefore it cannot live without realising them in life, through a spiritual awakening. If Love and Truth are not reflected in the life of man, his soul dies, as it were. He can live truly only when he loves truly. He must learn to live and practise Truth, Love, Charity, Humility, Self-denial and other moral qualities if he wants his own fulfilment. Bereft of these he is no better than an animal and his whole life is a dismal story. It means, moral and spiritual life is the law and the essence of a man's being. Since, the world in which he lives is, in essence, a moral, ethical and spiritual Order. Guru Nanak calls it Dharm-khand or Dharm-sal. He describes in Japji the concept of this Dharm-khand, thus :

‘ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ॥ ਪਵਨ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਤਾਲ ॥ ਤਿਸੁ
ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੀਅ ਜੁਗਤਿ
ਕੇ ਰੰਗ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਨੰਤ ॥ ਕਰਮੀ ਕਰਮੀ ਹੋਇ
ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਸਚਾ ਆਪਿ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥ ਤਿਥੈ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪੰਚ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ॥
ਨਦਰੀ ਕਰਮਿ ਪਵੈ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ ॥ ਕਚ ਪਕਾਈ ਓਥੈ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ
ਗਇਆਂ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾਇ ॥

“God created nights, days, seasons, air, water, fire and the nether regions. In their midst He set the earth as the Abode of Dharma. This Abode is inhabited by

different peoples and beings, of different names, colours and forms, and they are judged, according to their deeds, by Him Who is the True Lord and Whose Court is True. The approved ones look beautiful there and, visited by His Grace, they are annointed (as a sign of their acceptance by Him). 'Who is true and who is false' will be judged there (according to His Immutable Laws. No one can deceive Him). Sayeth Nanak, one knows the truth of the above, when one faces Him there'.

The lines assert that individuals and ultimately society too can live only on the support of Dharma, otherwise it disintegrates and dies out.

Again :

, 'ਧੌਲੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੁ' ॥

ਜਪੁਜੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ

"The support of the world is Dharma and it is born out of His Mercy (so as to enable the false ones to live anew, a good life, in accord with Dharma, in accord with His Laws—physical, moral and spiritual.

Guru Nanak in Japji.

In fact, the world is the very house of God, where He watches and decides.

'ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੇ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥ ਇਕਨਾਂ ਹੁਕਮੁ
ਸਮਾਇ ਲਏ ਇਕਨਾਂ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਕਰੈ ਵਿਨਾਸ' ॥ ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'The world is the Abode of the True One, and the True One resideth in it'. "Some get merged in Him in His Will and some others are thrown out, in His will".

Guru Nanak in Var Asa.

On this account, all human beings must learn to live in the moral plane in accord with His moral laws in the same way as they have to live in the physical plane in accord with His physical laws. In simple

words, it means, every man must live his every day life, subject to the Divine Will. He should consider himself as a part of society, earn his own livelihood, and conform to the physical and the highest ethical and moral standards. No individual has to be treated as inferior to the other, a mere tool to work for others, but a Divine personality, worthy of dignity and respect, for, God resides in him, as in others. Every man has to achieve self-fulfilment in this way and society should help promote that end and not hinder it. Society as a whole, will, thus, be built on Justice, and fair play and all maladjustments would be removed. This concept of equality and liberty will thus apply to the whole of mankind, irrespective of caste, country, race, religion and colour. It means that man's true development implies not merely the material or the physical aspects of his being, nor even the intellectual or the aesthetic aspects but above every other thing the moral and the spiritual aspects of his being. That is the way to bring about what may be called Dharm Raj, in this Dharm-Khand or Dharm-Sal, designed by the Creator Himself. This is what, in the familiar Indian parlance, is called the Divine Raj or the Ram Raj. It is the kingdom of God where Truth, Justice and Righteousness should prevail and love should determine human relationships. Guru Gobind Singh said, God had sent him to establish this kind of Raj.

‘ਜਗਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਥਾਰੋ’ ॥ ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Go and spread Dharma every where’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

The Sikhs later on called it ‘the Khalsa Raj’, the Raj of the emancipated and the pure ones. It was never

intended to be considered in any narrow communal sense. The Khalsa then formed the national army of patriots who never made any distinction on the basis of religion, caste or colour. It was conceived as the Brotherhood of the pure ones, based not merely on liberty, equality and fraternity but on self-denial, self-effacement, sacrifice and service of all, the thing now understood in India as Sarvodaya, a philosophy that has the good of all (ਸਰਬਤ ਕਾ ਭਲਾ) as its ideal. We will see later on what image of this Khalsa the Guru had visualised. Then shall we understand in perspective what significance the slogan 'Khalsa Raj' had at the time.

Since the martyrdom of his father, the Guru was engaged in the fulfilment of the tasks entrusted to him by his Guru-father. His predecessors had, from the time of the first Guru, worked laboriously to bring about Dharam Raj through creating revolutions in the minds of men. They had found people under the foreign yoke, ignorant, superstitious and divided among themselves in various ways. These people had to be first freed from the diverse religious and social tyrannies and made to stand on their own legs before they could be expected to throw off their political bondage. The work of awakening and then organising was enormous and had to be carried on for a sufficiently long time before concrete results were achieved and further programmes formulated. The tenth Guru, as we have seen, had reluctantly come to the conclusion that though violence was an evil that destroyed human values by breeding hatred and bitterness, it had to be employed as a painful necessity to check

violence of a most brutal kind, otherwise there would be still more chaos endangering the very basis of existence and making non-violence itself meaningless. We know, he had waited and waited and hesitated for fifteen or twenty years in the hope that conflict might still be avoided but ultimately had to accept it as a duty. His experiments, with violence could not but confirm that it was really an evil, though some times a necessary evil in the larger interests of society, as a whole. All the same, he could not be happy about it. He knew quite well that it was not war but peace that was the permanent condition of man. It was, therefore, quite natural for him to feel in the same way as his grand-father, Guru Hargobind, had felt, after he had fought, and successfully too, several battles with the imperial forces and as a reaction, had ordered his successor, Guru Har Rai, never to unsheathe, his sword, whatever the provocations. This order was, without doubt, prompted by his disgust for violence. Naturally we should find Guru Gobind Singh also more or less in that state of mind, some time after war operations had stopped, due to the intervention of Bhai Nand Lal, and he was free to think and take stock of what he had achieved and what still remained to be done.

If seers can not remain insensitive to the sufferings of people, they will not tolerate the lowering of moral values, that violence may engender. Did not Gandhiji withdraw his entire movement when the same had taken an ugly turn at chauri chaura ? In this condition of minds the Guru had, in course of time, retired to the Naina Devi Hills and engaged himself, along with other

literary men, in the translations and compositions of literary works. The Hills were really an ideal place for that kind of work. Also it was a quiet place for a Divine poet that he was, to feel himself in the lap of Nature and in communion with the Creator. The fact of his being at the Naina Devi Hills in 1755 Sambat, i.e. about an year before the Creation of the Khalsa, is confirmed by his own writings. He had translated at that place the 'Ram-avtar' from Sanskrit into Hindi and had given the date of its completion as 14th June, 1698 A. D., the equivalent of Sambat 1755. Besides the writing work, much of his time was being spent on spiritual discipline and meditations. He was busy all the time, yet it was quite natural for him too to think of the situation as it obtained then and this went on for a long time. Sometime during this period, people noticed a marked change in his behaviour and demeanour. He seemed to be rather reticent and non-communicative and desired very much to be left alone. He loved solitude and was seen frequently in deeply contemplative, prayerful and meditative moods. Since this state of affairs went on for a long time, his people felt anxious about him. Some thought he had lost his equilibrium and others that he was turned mad. It was evident to everybody who cared to observe closely that he had no visible control over himself. It seemed that some invisible Power and a firm hold on him, though people did not know what power it was. During one such moods, he had gone into ecstasy, a spiritual experience in which his own self had completely disappeared because of the contact of the higher faculties of his own mind, with the Universal Spirit. He was, as we have seen above, already strung

emotionally. He had been praying constantly for Light about the future course his life should take. He wanted to hear God's Voice and prayed for the same. The solitude of the place, the tranquil and peaceful atmosphere around him and the emotional fights his powerful mind was capable of having, had stimulated the process of union with the Creator. Guru Nanak had a similar experience at the Veine Stream, an experience which changed the entire course of his life and made him leave his hearth and home with a message of love for the vast world outside his little Talwandi. Guru Gobind Singh had similarly heard the inner Voice as a result of a mystic Communion with his Master. He met his God, face to face, as it were. It was the spirit meeting the Spirit, in the Purest and the Absolute form. He attained a state of super-consciousness and merged in the Supreme Spirit, the Embodiment of all Knowledge Power and Wisdom. His soul felt itself awakened and freed from all limitations of time and space. In this condition of mind, there could no longer be any illusion to limit his vision, as his soul had become one one with the Over-soul and his own will was completely in abeyance, being wholly controlled by the Supreme Will. In fact, the distinction between the knower and the known had, for the time being, dis-appeared. The Guru was filled with a sense of wonder and when, later he started to convey to the world, through the life story he wrote, he gave to the story the name, Bachittar Natak (wonderful drama), as the Vision and the Message emerging out of it formed the pivot or the central theme of this life story.

But before dealing with the Vision or its Message

it is necessary to say a few words about the Natak as a whole. The Natak is an epic, accepted as one of his own compositions, and describes in verse some important events of the drama of his life and is thus a work of very great value. But it should be remembered that it is presented in the form of a drama and though undoubtedly a literary and poetic work of great merit, it is not intended to be taken as historically true in all its details. Literary and artistic productions have to be judged by standards, different from those applied to purely historical works. We should go into the contents of the Natak to understand and appreciate this point of view.

The Natak consists of 14 cantos, in all. Of them, cantos, 1 and 14 sing the praises of the Immortal Lord, 8 to 12 describe the battles of Bhangani, Nadaun, and Anandpur and the 13th deals with the coming of Muazzam (Bahadur Shah) to the Panjab and of a royal messenger at Anandpur. Cantos 6 and 7 are the most important and speak of the Guru's pre-human existence when he was practising his meditations at the Hem Kunt Parbat and where he received orders from the Akal Purkh to take birth and carry His Message to the world. Cantos 2 to 5 need a special mention. They deal with the Sodhi and Bedi dynasties to give the ancestral back ground of the Gurus, going back to the Raghu line to which Rama belonged. Rama's two sons, Lahu and Kusu, had built Lahore and Kasur and their descendents reigned for a long time peacefully till the days of Kulket and Kalrai who fought each other resulting in the defeat of Kalrai. He ran away to Sanaudh country and married a king's daughter there. His son Sodhi Rai defeated the descendents of Kusu who fled to Benares and became

well-versed in Vedas and began to be called Vedis. The Sodhi king wrote to the Vedis to come back, which they did. On hearing the Vedas recited by them, he became a recluse and left for forests to meditate on God. The chief of the Vedas was pleased and blessed him thus : When I take birth in Kal-Age under the name of Nanak I will make thee Guru of the world (refers to Guru Ram Dass Sodhi). Also in tracing the lineage of Sodhis and Bedis from Kalsen and Kalket downwards, it is stated among other things, that the God Vishnu created demons from the wax of one of his ears, the other ear's wax serving as the wherewithal for moulding other things. God destroyed all that was thus created and out of the grease, he produced the earth. The statement then goes on to the time of king Dakhsh who had ten thousand daughters of unrivalled beauty, married to Dharm Raj, Shiva, Moon etc. Four of these daughters were married to Kashyap and gave birth to serpents, demons and gods etc. The Sun was also born to one of them and from him started the Sun or the Raghu dynasty etc. etc. The reader can now see that the above mythological references are not intended at all as historical truths.

Dr. Gokul Chand, has these and other such references in his mind when he says : 'The account given by the Guru of his previous life and the circumstances which led to his birth reads like an episode from the Puranas and all its details are saturated with the spirit of Hindu mythology'.

Now should the mythological references of this kind be taken too literally and accepted as historical facts ? Do we not know that a skilled artist can combine fact

and fiction with such ease as to produce a story looking quite natural, impressive and beautiful? His skill may convert even a myth and a legend into something real and great. Do not writers of even historical dramas take liberties of imagination with forcefully created events, not merely in regard to language but also in the introduction of romance, wit and humour? The Bachittar Natak as also so many other writings of the Guru have, besides their spiritual significance, a great poetic and artistic value. This fact should never be lost sight of if the Natak or, for that matter, any other literary work of the Guru or his court poets, is to be assessed properly. Failure to realise this important consideration has led to a lot of misunderstanding and confusion about the Guru's works, other than those dealing with purely spiritual matters. The geographical setting and the order of chronology of this drama have been deliberately altered to invest the story with romance, awe, beauty, excitement, mystery and sensation so as to make it most effective and grand. The venue of the Union of the soul with the Universal Soul is not the Naina Devi Hills, where it had actually taken place, but Hem Kunt. The time of the Merger is shifted back to the previous birth. In these alterations, the Guru-poet has taken some poetic licence which every poet has a right to take and he was a poet too of no mean order. We have already drawn a picture of his interests in literary works of diverse kinds, in a separate chapter. Of course, the alterations made in it do not affect at all the main issues—the Message and the way to implement it—and therefore should not be construed as unreasonable. There is the internal evidence in the Natak itself to confirm that the

conclusions we have arrived at are basically correct, though we have no desire to be quite dogmatic about it. Let us refer to it here directly before we deal with the Message, in order to realise that the Merger referred to in the Natak as having taken place in Hem Kunt was really the Union that had come about at the Naina Devi Hills. The Guru speaks of this Union in the Natak in this way :

‘ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਦੋਇ ਏਕ ਹੈਂ ਬਿਬ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਕਿਛ ਨਾਹਿ ॥ ਜਲ ਤੇ
ਉਪਜ ਤਰੰਗ ਜਿਉਂ ਜਲ ਹੀ ਬਿਖੈ ਸਮਾਹਿ’ ॥

‘The Master and His slave had become one, there could be no doubt about it. They were as united as waves rising in water and then merging in it completely’.

The fact that the Merger or the Union had come off as the result of worship and meditations, is referred to in the Natak, thus :

‘ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਕਰਤ ਤਪਸਿਆ ਭਇਉ ॥ ਦੂ ਤੇ ਏਕ ਰੂਪ ਹੋ ਗਯੋ’ ॥

‘I carried on such spiritual discipline as led me to get blended with him’.

And what was being worshipped ? Here is the reply :

‘ਤਹ ਹਮ ਅਧਕ ਤਪਸਿਆ ਸਾਧੀ ॥ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਲ ਕਾਲਕਾ ਆਰਾਧੀ’ ॥

‘There I performed great austerities (spiritual discipline through meditations and the Simran of the Name). The Great-Death (God) was the Kalka (Durga), that I worshipped’.

Now if it were supposed that the Guru was engaged in some worship in Hem Kunt, as the Natak seemed to indicate, what purpose could there be in the abrupt use of the word Kalka here ? Mahan-Kal (the Great-Death) was a familiar enough word that the Guru

frequently employed for God. In the rest of the narrative, describing the Union with the Supreme Spirit, the face to face dialogue with It and the way to carry out the Commands of the Master, God was addressed in familiar terms, such as Alakh (the Unknowable), Gurdeva (The Divine Teacher), Prabhu (the Lord), Parmeshwar (The Supreme Lord), Hari, Ishwar, Param-Purkh (The Supreme Person), Param Tat (the Supreme Essence) etc. a dozen and odd times. What significance could there be in the abrupt reference and that too only once, to Kalka (the goddess Durga) that had nothing to do with the event of the merger, if the same had taken place before his birth. The fact is, as we shall see in the next chapter, that he had in his mind another event taking place at the Naina Devi Hills in which people were engaged in devotional ceremonies associated with the name of Durga at exactly the time or a little before that time when he himself was worshipping the Mahan-Kal, resulting in the Union and the consequential revelations. He simply gave expression to this event that was already registered in the mind, by stating that he too had worshipped his own Kalka, the Great-Death.

This simple word 'Kalka' has a history of its own. Many admirers of the Guru have often felt embarrassed over the use of this word in this context. They argue that the Guru was consistently opposed to the worship of gods and goddesses and so the word should not have been there. Some over-enthusiastic among them would very much like the word to be removed from the context as, according to their way of thinking, it must have been an interpolation. On the other hand there are people who want to make political capital

out of it. They feel convinced that the Guru was a devotee of the goddess Kali (Durga) and they find further strength for this conviction from a story of the havan in which the Guru is alleged to have participated in the worship of Durga. We will refer to it in a detailed manner in the next chapter.

The simple mention here of 'Kalka' points to the place where the Guru was at the time he heard the Voice within him. He was then not at the Hem Kunt, as suggested in the Natak, but at the Naina Devi Hills where the Union had actually taken place. If our interpretation is contended, then we may be permitted to ask. How is it that the actual creation of the Khalsa took place some time immediately after the Naina Devi event and not much earlier? If Orders for its creation were received before his birth, as stated in the Natak, the first thing the Guru would have done on assuming Guruship was to bring the Khalsa Panth into being. No time could have been more suitable for the purpose than the one when his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the idol of the people for his saintliness, was brutally murdered and, in consequence, the sympathy and moral support of the whole Nation were behind him. There was another very suitable occasion for founding the Brotherhood when he started his wars with the Rajas and with the imperial forces. And yet he did not do it till he had the Vision at the Hills. Not only that. He did not so much as make a mention of having a special Message for the world, not even in any of the several compositions he wrote in Paonta and on the Sutlej bank under the shadow of the Hills. Krishan-avtar was finished at Paonta in 1688 A.D. while Triya-charittar and Ram-avtar were com-

pleted on the Sutlej bank in 1696 A.D. and 1698 A.D. The Guru spoke of the Message for the first time in Bachittar Natak and the Natak did not bear any date of its completion, perhaps to ensure that the drama did not look unreal. But since the Natak described the three battles with the Hill Chiefs as also of the arrival of the royal messenger, there could be no doubt that it was written sometime after these events i.e. about the time the Brotherhood came into being. And why did he start his wars before creating the Khalsa Brotherhood? There is yet another most unassailable consideration. What were the contents of the Message delivered at the Hills through the Inner Voice if it were not for the creation of the Brotherhood, assuming that this task had already been entrusted to him even before he took his birth? It seems obvious, therefore, that the Guru is referring in the Natak to his mystical experiences at the Naina Devi Hills, though he has shifted their timing to the previous birth. This is how all this appears to us and we are quite clear that it is in keeping with the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors. Guru Nanak, himself, has been deified and miraculised by his followers, investing him with a super-human status though he had always declared that he was no more than man. True, he had grown up to enormous proportions in the estimation of his people and as they could not reach him they looked upon him as an extreme expression of Divinity and built up stories around him, according to the varying psychological, intellectual and moral levels of their thinking. The fact of the matter is that the Gurus, Avtars, Saints, Prophets and sons of God were all born, subject to the Laws of God and had to struggle for building themselves

before they could guide others. (For its elaboration please see the closing chapter—chapter XVI.) Yet we do not claim the last word on the subject and there can be a different interpretation.

A word about these experiences seems to us quite necessary, for, there are also men who take these experiences as mere mental hallucinations, born out of excessive sentimentalism, i.e. nothing better than some sort of emotional reaction based on irrational faith. They even confuse them, sometimes, with the so-called absorption in voidness or with the abstract and meaningless introversions that lead to nothing. Failure on the part of Sikh writers to present a correct interpretation of the Vision is responsible for so much ignorance. Cunningham, for instance, describes the Vision as a mere allegory having no actuality, in fact. This is how he has interpreted the Vision : "In an extant and authentic composition (Vachittar Natak), he (the Guru) traces his mortal descent to ancient kings and he extols the piety of his immediate parents which rendered them acceptable to God. But his own unembodied soul, he says, reposed in bliss, wrapt in meditation, and it murmured that it should appear on earth even as the chosen messenger of the Lord—the inheritor of the spirit of Nanak, transmitted to him as one lamp imparts its flame to another. Each (God's messenger) established ways of his own and misled the world, but he (the Guru) himself had come to declare a perfect faith, to extend virtue and to destroy evil. Such is Gobind's mode of presenting his mission, but his followers have extended the allegory and have variously given an earthly close to his celestial vision'.

The last line in the above statement refers to the so-called Durga worship, as is amplified by the writer himself. We shall quote the same in the next chapter.

Dr. Gokal Chand Narang too has not been able to understand correctly how the merger had come about and the Message actually delivered. This is how he interprets the same :

‘He realised the miserable condition of his race and by constant meditation came to feel that he had a mission to fulfil and God had sent him for the amelioration of his Nation. And like all great men who have helped in the advancement of humanity, he felt that he himself was the man required by the times’.

The thing really is that it is not possible for these good men, much less for the generality of people, to appreciate the significance or the quality and worth of a spiritual experience which is alien to them. They are not suitably qualified for appreciating a spiritual perception, or an intuitive inspiration of such a high order. How can a man enjoy the value of a symphony, without a musical ear? How can a man who has never loved, know the state of mind of a lover? A phenomenon may be extraordinary, mysterious and out of line with daily experience. But it is an experience, after all, and should not be dismissed as illusory without experimenting with it, and it should be treated with the same open-minded attitude with which more familiar phenomenon are judged. Cold reasoning does not provide an insight into the sort of experience in which the soul of a man merges in the Over-soul. It should be remembered that it comes only to the purest souls who are capable of applying spiritual vision by surrendering themselves completely to

Him. So long as the dual feeling that one is different from Him remains He cannot be seen. When this duality is destroyed by the love of the Name, immense power is generated that drops all barriers between the self and the Higher Self. Just as a river merges in the sea and becomes its part so also one who can dive deep becomes His Part and is transformed into a power as great as He is. The fact, however, remains that this kind of experience is beyond the realm of intellect and depends on the quality of the soul, capable of producing a state of higher consciousness in which perfect peace, ineffable calm, confidence, inner strength and happiness are generated. Then everything becomes blissful. This wonderful fact of experience is often likened to that of a dumb person enjoying the sweetness of honey without being able to convey to others what it was like.

That is exactly what happened to the Guru at the Hills. After he had the Vision, he appeared quite happy and fully satisfied. The Divine sanction for his Mission had been received. All his doubts and hesitations were gone. He saw clearly that the Vision had a great significance for mankind. He was therefore full of the Message, regarded himself as His humble Instrument, and wished to give immediate effect to it. He felt unbounded strength within himself. His people were pleased as also surprised at the change that had been brought about in him. He left the Hills, shortly after, and came down to the plains. He first held a sumptuous feast to mark the glory of the Vision. He had now visualised clearly what he was called upon to do. He sent word to his Sikhs and admirers all over the country to meet him in Anandpur on the Baisakhi day to hear

the Message. At Kesgarh, in the precincts of Anandpur, large numbers of Sikhs gathered, in pursuance of his call.

But let us stop here to study the contents of the Message as given in the Bachittar Natak. It will be enough for our purpose if we give the relevant portions on the subject. First, the purpose of his coming into the world is expressed poetically in the form of a Command from the Master, which may be summed up thus :

‘ਹਮ ਇਹ ਕਾਜ ਜਗਤ ਮੋ ਆਏ ॥ ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਪਠਾਏ ॥
ਜਹਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਥਾਰੋ ॥ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਦੋਖੀਅਨ ਪਕਰ ਪਛਾਰੋ ॥
ਇਹੈ ਕਾਜ ਧਰਾ ਹਮ ਜਨਮੰ ॥ ਸਮਝ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਭ ਮਨਮੰ ॥ ਧਰਮ
ਚਲਾਵਣ ਸੰਤ ਉਬਾਰਨ ॥ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੋ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ’ ॥

“The Lord sent me into the world for the purpose of spreading Dharma. He said to me : ‘Go and spread Dharma (righteousness) every where, sieze and smash the evil doers’. Know ye holy men, I have come solely for the purpose of bringing about Dharma, saving holymen, and completely uprooting wicked men”.

Again,

‘ਜਾਇ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੈ ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਇ ॥ ਕੁਬੁਧਿ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਟਾਇ’ ॥
‘Go and spread Dharma everywhere and stop people from acts of perverseness’.

The above lines emphasise the purpose for which he had come to the world. He had to do two things, one positive and the other negative. He had to spread Dharma through strengthening holymen who, in the ultimate analysis, were the real power that worked for the good of humanity. This was his positive role. But he had also to destroy evil doers. It was a negative

role and a more difficult one as it necessitated the use of violent means, but it had to be carried on as before till the evil doers were uprooted. The constructive and the destructive roles had to go on simultaneously.

The Guru's initial reactions to the Lord's Commands were in keeping with his frame of mind at the Hills where he was daily praying for Light. There was always a disgust for violence in the hearts of sages. So was it, in his case. He could preach all right against evil and make sacrifices too for his convictions, as other Gurus had done. But he was here called upon to destroy the evil persons because they had made life for other people unbearable. Here are his initial re-actions, as stated by himself in the Natak :

‘ਚਿਤ ਨ ਭਯੋ ਹਮਰੋ ਆਵਨ ਕਹਿ ॥ ਚੁਭੀ ਰਹੀ ਸੁਰਤ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਚਰਨਣ ਮਹਿ’ ॥

‘I did not like to come out of my samadhi as my mind loved to dwell continually on the Lord's Feet’.

But God had willed it and it must be done. In fact, he had been doing it already. The great sage that he was had a clairvoyant streak in his mental make up and was already doing his job and doing it quite well. Yet he saw things long range and in spacious dimensions, as a true sage or a seer would, and had hesitated to carry on and prayed for Light. The Lord's Commands simply re-affirmed faith in what he was doing already. There was now before him a full justification for the continued use of force till conditions for honourable existence were restored and, therefore, there was no need for hesitations any longer. An honourable living for holy men must be vouch-safed and the wicked must be uprooted. The Vision was really the essence of his own philosophy in action,

epitomised in just four words, as expressed by himself :

‘ਸ੍ਰੀਤਾਂ ਮਾਨੋਂ ਦੂਤਾਂ ਡਾਨੋਂ’ ॥

‘I shall strengthen the holy men and destroy the wicked’.

The things that emerged out of the Vision, were already in his mind but there were hesitations too. The contact of the faculties of his mind with Higher Powers simply brought re-assurance that he was acting correctly. Thus he found full support for the above philosophy and felt strengthened to carry on the work as before.

But what were the means at his disposal ? The task was colossal. A mighty empire had to be fought against. He had brave Sikhs and valiant fighters behind him. Was that enough or something more was required ? Also would the evil end with the end of the Mughal Domination ? Did not evil re-appear in various forms ? The Sikh Nation had been in the making for a long time in his hands as also in the hands of his predecessors. Though much had been done for the upliftment of masses in a general manner, was not something more needed to ensure against their falling back to the old ways ? The Guru found an answer in the Message which he poetically expressed thus as indicating the direction in which he was to work :

‘ਮੈਂ ਅਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੋਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ॥ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਚਰ ਕਰਬੇ ਕੋ ਸਾਜਾ’ ॥

‘I bless thee to be my son and commission thee to bring about the Way (Panth) or God’s Religion’.

The word ‘Panth’ literally means the Way or the Path or God’s Religion and those that tread the Path make

the Panth. It was in this sense that the 'Panth' was to be brought into being, to spread God's Religion. The Guru was to bring about Dharma in the world by founding the Khalsa Panth i.e. by creating a new race of humanity to be called the Panth, that would dedicate itself to God and to the love and service of humanity.

That the word 'Panth' was used in this wide sense is clear from the long Sermon, God had addressed, as stated in the Natak by the Guru. No Panth, it said, could be God's Panth that worked on narrow egoistic lines. Here are a few selections out of this Sermon, which, in the order of narration, appear in the first place, i.e. they are put in the very beginning of the Message, to emphasise their importance :

‘ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਾਖ ਨਮਿਤ ਠਹਰਾਏ ॥ ਤੇ ਹਿਆਂ ਆਇ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਕਹਿਵਾਏ ॥
ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਬਾਤ ਬਿਸਰ ਜਾਤੀ ਭੀ ॥ ਅਪਨੀ ਅਪਨੀ ਪ੍ਰਤ ਸੋਭ ਭੀ’ ॥

‘They whom He had deputed as mere witnesses for the spread of His Glory, on coming here, allowed themselves to be called the Master. They forgot Him and engaged themselves in self-glorification’.

Again :

‘ਜੋ ਕੋਊ ਹੋਤ ਭਯੋ ਜਗ ਸਯਾਨਾ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਤਿਨ ਅਪਨੋ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਣਾ’ ॥

‘Those who acquired some wisdom in this world, they started to preach their own faith (they forgot God's Religion for which they were sent)’.

Again :

‘ਜਿਨ ਜਿਨ ਤਨਿਕ ਸਿਧ ਕੋ ਪਾਯੋ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਤਿਨ ਅਪਨਾ ਰਾਹ ਚਲਾਯੋ ॥ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਨਹਿ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਪਛਾਣਾ ॥ ਮਮ ਉਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਭਯੋ ਦਿਵਾਨਾ’ ॥

“Whoever attained some occult powers, started to establish his own cult (as distinct from God’s Religion). No one realised the Supreme Spirit, because of being intoxicated through self-praise”.

The lines point out that teachers, prophets and messengers whom God had sent for the guidance of people, arrogated to themselves exclusive Divinity and their followers raised them to the position that was God’s. As against that, the Guru was called upon to establish God’s Religion on earth through an organised Panth, to be founded by him, without assuming for himself powers that belonged to God. The Khalsa Brotherhood as visualised above was to become the mighty union of love, sacrifice and service. The kingdom of God on earth was to be promoted through the Brotherhood of the pure and the liberated souls that had no self left in them.

The Guru had himself always entertained the apprehension that organised Church had the tendency to degenerate into something sectarian, narrow and communal. For him, true religion had meant the Vision of the Supreme Reality. It meant Light and Life and therefore something above the systems of speculations, rites, creeds, dogmas, rituals or ceremonies. He believed that God was pleased with those only who acted upon the Principles of religious life and therefore no people should consider themselves as God’s chosen ones. Mere form counted for little and had no sustaining force. He was convinced that the true aim of religion was to bring people together, yet actually it had often alienated man from man. And he was perfectly right. Had not people suffered unspeakable barbarities and oppressions

at each other's hands when their so-called religions degenerated into intellectual and social tyranny? Was not the ruthless persecution of the Jews and the Muslims by the Christians an abominable thing that had destroyed Christianity itself? The world had witnessed the Jews being murdered for centuries by hysterical mobs on the charge of deicide (the killing of God). Protestants professing Christianity were burnt alive in the name of Christianity. Terrible sufferings, as we have seen before, were inflicted on the Hindus in the name of Islam. Yet the perpetrators of these diabolical and brutal crimes were applauded by their co-religionists as if these were achievements in the cause of religion. Sikhism itself had sprung as a protest against this state of affairs and sacrificed the best, the noblest and the purest men, to root out communal frenzy from the face of India. The Guru had already had, in the personal sense also, a taste of that frenzy. He had sacrificed his own father and his great grand-father at the altar of organised Church and had, in anguish, said :

‘ਪਾਪ ਕਰਹਿ ਪਰਮਾਰਥ ਕੈ ਜਿਹ ਪਾਪਨ ਤੇ ਅਤ ਪਾਪ ਲਜਾਹੀ’ ॥

‘The crimes committed in the name of religion are such that the worst crimes blush before them’. And only recently, countless Muslims in Iran were sent before the flying squads in the name of Islam, and in Lebanon too Christians and Muslims slaughtered each other without the fear of God. And in free India there have been Hindu and Muslim problems and more recently Hindus and Sikh problems.

It was the spirit of tolerance towards others which really was the bedrock for a religion to stand upon. Hostility to all inquiry and a fanatical opposition to any

change from its set pattern was bound to lead to disastrous consequences and produce secularism, unbelief and irreligion. The unholy desire to monopolise everything to itself was the sign of decadence. As a reaction to this situation, people had now been compelled to build nationalities not on creeds but on political interests. In the misguided zeal for faith, people tended to forget that despite differences on belief, here or there, their destinies were so interwoven that they would rise and fall together. It was always the petty ego, whether in the individual or in the community or in the nation that made them look down upon their fellow beings. True religion should express itself in love and devotion to God and in service of man. Profession of faith should have its roots in the inner life of the Nation as a whole and labels were acceptable only if they advanced spiritual life. No one had the right to preach in any fanatical manner the superiority of one's own faith. The fanatical image of any real or supposed superiority rendered outlook narrow and killed initiative, vitality and independence. Others' points of view should be admitted with the same veneration as was accorded to one's own, provided these were basically in conformity with truth and helped man to advance spiritually. Truth being universal there was no question of a monopoly or the privilege of a few. Conservatism and rigidity hindered growth and killed vitality. Freedom of thought and respect for Truth were the signs of a living religion. Dogmatism produced unhealthy competition and an unholy urge to advance at the cost of others, by all means, fair or foul. The philosophy of love, toleration and universal brotherhood were then forgotten. Those

who did not have the capacity to think for themselves and whom custom and tradition alone guided, were like the blades of straw that simply flew in the direction of the wind. Fanatics too were tossed about in the direction of popular opinion and could not become a vital force to strengthen religion. They could be easily exploited and employed as tools by unscrupulous people. True, it was very difficult to swim against the stream but those who did it, gathered strength and vitality. In short, the message of a true religion was always of a universal nature and therefore had its appeal for all. It always united people and removed all artificial barriers that man, in his ignorance, had created for himself.

The above picture of an organised Church was ever before the Guru. So it must cause hesitation when the creation of another organised Church was suggested to him. He remembered quite well how his predecessors had looked at the problem. Guru Nanak was often asked as to what his religion or sect was. Every time he humbly replied that people called him Nanak Nirankari (Nanak of the Formless One). He meant to say that he belonged to Him who had no Form and who was beyond time and space and therefore he did not believe in religion, in the popular sense. He was always reluctant to organise a community, in the popular pattern. Instead, he wanted to raise humanity, as a whole, devoted to God. He had no patience with religion, in its communal manifestations because he saw that in course of time ideals and teachings tended to become dogmatised and fossilised. To the Raja Shivnabh of Ceylon, he gave the following reply, characteristically his own, which was of great value for

all organised religions to learn :

ਜੋਗੀ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰਮਾਇਲ ਤਾਂਕੈ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਰਾਤੀ ॥ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ
ਨਾਥੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਚ ਸੰਗੇ ਜਨਮ ਮਟਣ ਗਤਿ ਬੀਤੀ ॥ ਗੁਸਾਈ ਤੇਰਾ
ਕਹਾ ਨਾਮ ਕੈਸੇ ਜਾਤੀ ॥ ਜਾਂ ਤਉ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਮਹਲਿ ਬੁਲਾਵਹਿ
ਪੂਛਉ ਬਾਤ ਨਿਰੰਤਰੀ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨੀ ਹਰਿ
ਗਣ ਪੂਜੇ ਪਾਤੀ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਨ ਏਕਾ ਜੋਤੀ ॥
ਜਿਹਵਾ ਡੰਡੀ ਇਹੁ ਘਟੁ ਛਾਬਾ ਤੋਲਉ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਜਾਚੀ..." ॥

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘The true Yogi is one who knoweth the Way of the Pure Name and not a trace of soil sticketh to him. The Loved One, the Master of the Universe, the True One, is ever with Him and so he overcometh the state of coming and going. O God, what is Thy Name and what is Thy Caste ? If Thou callest me in Thy Presence I would get this doubt removed. A true Brahmin is he who is bathed in God’s Wisdom, worshippeth Him with the leaf-offerings of virtue and meditateth on the Name of the Lord, whose Light illumineth the three worlds. I make my tongue the beam, the heart the scales and I weigh therewith the unweighable Name’.

Guru Nanak in Maru

Raja Shivnabh’s question was first humourously referred to God for an answer and then the Guru himself answered on His behalf, that as He had no Form, all distinctions of name, form, caste and creed should disappear. Thus a true Yogi was one who knew the True Name. So also a true Brahmin was one who bathed in God’s Wisdom and meditated on His Name. The Yogi and the Brahmin thus got united and became one. It was in this way that the true purpose of a religious life was realised.

That was how Guru Nanak had looked at religion and so also the other Gurus. Guru Tegh Bahadur had died a martyr to protect a faith which was not his own because he believed that all men had the right to choose their own form of belief. This was all right so far as it went. But it did not go far enough, for a mind with such a universal outlook as Guru Tegh Bahadur had, was a rare phenomenon. It was, after all, an individual and one of exceptional merit who had set an example of a truly religious spirit. The question before the Guru, then, was much bigger. He was to found a Brotherhood that should have that outlook, as a whole. Time had now come when it was not a question of mere theorising or even applying a universal doctrine in the life of this or that individual. A Nation had to be created with a distinctiveness of its own, with its forms, symbols, rituals and ceremonies. Sikhism had its origin in extreme reaction against conventionalism of all kinds. But now it was to become a Nation with conventions of its own. This Nation, as a whole, was to learn and exhibit qualities that men like Guru Tegh Bahadur had already displayed individually. This was really a very difficult task and so it was natural to feel diffident about it. It may be stated here that on this point as also on other points, discussed in the chapter, the Guru's own mind must be working already in the direction which the Vision indicated and ultimately confirmed. He knew quite well that Sikhism had to be given its distinctive character and the Sikhs their individuality, if total absorption into other faiths was to be avoided. But the evil effects of an organised religion always stood before him as a damper. The Vision only re-assured him to go

ahead, keeping in view the Sermon in the context of the Organisation that was to be set up.

The Guru now accepted the Commands. Here is his statement in this regard :

‘ਠਾਂਢ ਭਯੋ ਮੈਂ ਜੋਰ ਕਰ ਬਚਨ ਕਹਾਂ ਸਿਰ ਨਾਇ ॥

ਪੰਥ ਚਲੈ ਤਬ ਜਗਤ ਮੈਂ ਜਬ ਤੁਮ ਕਰੋ ਸਹਾਇ’ ॥

‘I stood up with my hands clasped (to signify acceptance) and spoke with utmost humility thus : ‘Thy Panth would surely come into being if Thy Support were extended to me’ ”.

And he declared his resolve to act upto the Commands of the Master, thus :

‘ਕਹਿਯੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਸੋ ਭਾਖ ਹੋਂ ॥ ਕਿਸੂ ਨ ਕਾਨ ਰਾਖਹੋਂ ॥ ਕਿਸੂ ਨ ਭੇਖ
ਭੀਜ ਹੋਂ ॥ ਅਲੇਖ ਬੀਜ ਬੀਜ ਹੋਂ’ ॥

‘Whatever He spoke to me, the same shall I speak to men. I will pay no regard to any but the One Lord. I will not adopt the way of any creed but will sow the Seeds only of the Unknowable Lord’.

We have given above our own interpretation of the Vision and the Message that emerged out of it. We do not claim that this interpretation is flawless, and it must be a bold man that did it. After all, we are dealing with a drama and the Guru’s way of presenting it. Interpretations might therefore differ. We should, however, ensure that the substance and the essentials were not lost or confused with the non-essentials. The Guru was commissioned to found the Khalsa Brotherhood of a particular kind, that would dedicate itself to the cause of Dharma. This was the essential part of the Message. There was never any intention in his mind of creating the organisation or the Panth in any narrow

communal sense. It was meant to become God's Instrument, yoked to the service of mankind. The Panth should see that it was fulfilling the high purposes that its founder had envisaged. All barriers that were assiduously broken by the Guru's untiring efforts should never be re-created in another form. No worldly considerations should be allowed to corrupt the great ideals set before the Khalsa. We will revert to this topic in the chapter on the 'Khalsa Brotherhood'. But first we have to deal with another important topic, relating to Durga worship.

CHAPTER X

Durga worship with a difference

Which Kalka did I worship ? Mahan-Kal (the Great-Death).

‘ਮਹਾਂਕਾਲ ਕਾਲਕਾ ਆਰਾਧੀ’ ॥

ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Mahan-Kal (the Great-Death i.e. God) was the Kalka (Durga) that I had worshipped’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

A passing reference to ‘Kalka’ was made in the foregoing chapter, in connection with the worship at Hem Kunt. This little word i.e. Kalka, brings us now to another matter that has unnecessarily created a lot of misunderstanding and confusion. Historians have claimed that during his stay at the Naina Devi Hills, the Guru had agreed to a havan (hom) for the worship of the goddess Durga. Many of them do not stop at that and draw conclusions therefrom which are absolutely unwarranted and can only be either the reflections of their own views, notions and prejudices or the result of colossal ignorance. Though their versions conflict with each other in several respects, both in detail and in substance, yet the main narrative can be summed up thus :

A Pandit engaged for relating Katha (stories) of the heroes and warriors of old times suggested to the Guru,

through some of the Sikhs, that mighty warriors like Arjuna and Bhim, owed their might to the goddess Kali (Durga) and if it was desired that the Guru's Sikhs should also become braver and stronger than they already were, a havan with all its ceremonies, acts of devotion, austerities and other forms of worship of the goddess, should be performed to propitiate her and to secure her blessings. All this entailed heavy expense over the material for the havan and over its maintenance, since the ceremony was expected to last for a long time. A Pandit, Kesho Dass of Benares (Dattanand of Ujjain, according to Gur-bilas) claimed that he possessed the power to make the goddess appear and that he was ready to undertake the task if his instructions in respect of rites, ceremonies and devotional exercises were carried out to the letter and this was agreed to. A great feast was held for making a selection of the most holy Brahmins from among the invitees, who were to perform the sacrificial rites and burnt offerings. Preparations for the performance of the havan were started and then the prescribed ceremonies were duly performed in accordance with the Pandit's wishes.

After this, there are variants of the story. Some say that no goddess had appeared even though about a year had already elapsed since the start of worship. A number of austere practices which the Guru is said to have undertaken, had also been performed. Kesho Dass realised that the brunt of failure would fall on him and he would be exposed and punished. He offered the suggestion that if a really virtuous person were sacrificed, the goddess would certainly appear. He had the Guru's son in mind as he thought that the

Guru would not permit such a sacrifice and as a result the situation would get confused and cover up his own failure. The Guru divining his thoughts took him by surprise by suggesting that the priest himself was the most suitable person for the sacrifice. Kesho Dass ran away in fear. All the remaining hom material was thrown into the fire in a lump, causing flames of fire to rise up over the lofty hill and scatter fragrance in all directions. The large flame seen for miles around was taken by many people as a sign of the appeasement of the goddess, who, they thought, had appeared with the illuminations. The sword which the Guru brought brandishing in his hands was looked upon as the gift of the goddess. Some writers say that the Kali had actually appeared but she revealed herself only to the Guru and gave him a sword which would bless him with victories in the wars to come. There are divergent statements in respect of the duration of the ceremony, the mantras read out, the name of the Pandit at the head of the hom, the assistant priests, the offerings made to the goddess and so on. Some say that instead of a human sacrifice, a few drops of blood from the Guru's little finger were accepted and then the Guru got her blessings for founding the Khalsa Brotherhood, to win his battles.

We propose to give here in full, the statement of Cunningham also, even though it is most ridiculous and absurd, in its details. We want to show to the reader how the history of a person of the eminence of Guru Gobind Singh may get mutilated and disfigured to an enormous extent, through misconceived notions and views, held by some of the devotees themselves. Cunningham is not hostile to the Guru but he is very

much misinformed. In this case, his version has simply followed the line of some of the Sikh writers. Yet it goes to his credit that he has not been able to accept as true what he has stated himself and has a fling too at the Sikh writers, who, according to him as stated in the last chapter, have given an earthly close to the Guru's celestial vision. It is obvious that he has in mind writers like Sukha Singh of 'Gur-bilas' and has not looked into the statements of so many other Sikh writers who do not accept all that he attributes to them, though they themselves have not done adequate justice to the Guru and his way of thinking, in this regard. Here is his statement :

‘He (the Guru) is stated to have performed the most austere devotions at the fane of the Goddess-mother of mankind on the summit of the hill Naina, and to have asked how in the olden times the heroic Arjuna transpierced multitudes with an arrow. He was told that by prayer and sacrifice, the power had been attained. He invited from Benaras a Brahmin of great fame for piety and for power over the unseen world. He himself carefully consulted the Vedas and he called upon his numerous disciples to aid him in the awful ceremony he was about to perform. Before all, he makes successful trial of the virtue of the magician and an ample altar is laboriously prepared for the Hom or burnt offerings. He is told that the goddess would appear to him, an armed shade, and that, undaunted, he should hail her and ask for fortune. The Guru, terror-struck, could but advance his sword, as if in salutation to the dread appearance. The goddess touched it in token of acceptance and a divine weapon, an axe of iron, was seen amid the flames. The sign was

declared to be propitious, but fear had rendered the sacrifice incomplete and Gobind must die himself or devote to death one dear to him to ensure the triumph of his faith. The Guru smiled sadly. He said, he had yet much to accomplish in this world and that his father's spirit was still unappeased. He looked towards his children but maternal affection withdrew them. Twenty five disciples then sprang forward and declared their readiness to perish. One was gladdened by being chosen and the Fates were satisfied. Gobind is next represented to have again assembled his followers and made known to them the great object of his mission. A new faith had been declared and henceforth the Khalsa, the saved or the liberated alone should prevail'.

To complete the picture we would point out what several Sikh writers state, in effect. 'Panth Parkash', for instance, says that when the Guru agreed to the havan proposal, he did not have any faith in Durga. He only wanted to expose the hollowness of the belief in the power of Durga, held by many of her devotees. It says further after Kesho Dass had fled out of fear, the hom material was put into the fire, which blazed forth in a large flame. Then the Guru came out brandishing a naked sword to tell the wondering crowd that the sword in his hand was the Kali which demanded heads to satisfy her thirst and then it would destroy evil doers.

The above narratives and the divergent statements of different writers, with all the implications that emerge from them, make dismal reading and are a verdict of History against the so-called historians themselves. The narratives are a very poor presentation of what the Guru lived and died for, as will be clear from a

perusal of the coming pages. Yet it will be equally wrong to rush to the other extreme and conclude that the whole narrative is fictitious and a mere figment of the writers' imagination. It is inconceivable that so many writers, some of them honest and intelligent, should speak of an event in which so many people were involved and which lasted for over an year, having no basis at all in fact. It is true that the presentation taken as a whole is most ridiculous and does violence to truth and to the Guru's way of thinking. Also it may not be possible at this late stage to discover true facts about the havan in all its details. Yet it is not fair to assert categorically that no event of the havan had taken place at all. All the same, we have to reconcile the havan with the Guru's declared teachings and views. We should remember that he was no ordinary man. Any divergence between his declared views and his actions would surely have impaired his prestige and weakened the loyalty and allegiance of his followers who had continued to make the highest sacrifices at his bidding, upto the end of his life. And his worst detractors cannot but admit that he like his predecessors, had always advocated the worship of one God and forbade that of gods and goddesses in the strongest language possible. Even the historians who assert that he had worshipped Durga at the havan do not deny that he propagated the worship of God alone. In fact, as we can see from his philosophy, stated in the last chapter, that the rejection of the worship of anything except God is the outstanding fact of his teachings. He ridiculed the worship of minor gods and goddesses in scathing terms. Here are some of his writings on the subject :

‘ਕੋਊ ਦਿਸੇਸ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਤ ਹੈ ਅਰ ਕੋਊ ਮਹੇਸ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਤੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਕੋਊ
ਕਹੈ ਬਿਸਨੋਂ ਬਿਸਨਾਯਕ ਜਾਹਿ ਭਜੇ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਕਟੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਬਾਰ
ਹਜਾਰ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਅਰੇ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਅੰਤ ਸਮੈਂ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਤਜ ਜੈ ਹੈ ॥
ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਧਯਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨ ਹੀਯੇ ਜੋਊ ਥਾ ਅਬ ਹੈ ਅਰ ਆਗੈਊ ਹੁੈ ਹੈ’ ॥
ਤੇਤੀ ਸਵੈਯੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Some worship Brahma and some call Shiva God. Some say Vishnu is the Lord of the Earth by whose worship all sins depart. O ignorant man, think a thousand times (over the futility of this sort of worship), none of these shall avail thee at the end. Dwell on Him alone in your heart Who was, Who is and Who ever shall remain’.

Guru Gobind Singh in 33 Swaiyyas.

Again :

‘ਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ ਮੈਂ ਕੋਟਕ ਬਿਸਨ ਮਹੇਸ ॥ ਕੋਟਿ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ
ਕਿਤੇ ਰਵਿ ਸਸਿ ਕੋਟਿ ਜਲੇਸ’ ॥ ਚੌਬੀਸ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥
‘In the Body of the Lord, there are millions of Vishnus and Shivas. In it are contained millions of Brahmas and Indras and millions of the Sun-gods, the Moon-gods and the water-gods’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Chaubis-avtar.

Again :

‘ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਸਭ ਜਗਤ ਬਨਾਯੋ ॥ ਦੇਵ ਦੈਤ ਜਛਣ ਉਪਜਾਯੋ ॥
ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤ ਏਕੈ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ ॥ ਸੋਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਮਝਿਉ ਹਮਾਰਾ’ ॥
ਚੌਪਈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘My Guru is the Lord that made the world, created gods, demons and yakashas and is incarnated in all, from the Beginning to the End’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Chaupai.

Again :

‘ਜਿਨ ਜਿਨ ਨਾਮੁ ਤਿਹਾਰੋ ਧਯਾਯਾ ॥ ਦੂਖ ਪਾਪ ਤਿਨ ਨਿਕਟ ਨ
ਆਯਾ ॥ ਜੋ ਜੋ ਧਯਾਨ ਔਰ ਕੋ ਧਰਹੀ ॥ ਬਹਿਸ ਬਹਿਸ ਬਾਦਨ ਤੇ
ਮਰਹੀ’ ॥ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Sin and suffering do not come near those who meditate on Thy Name, O Lord. But they who dwell on other deities, destroy themselves in futile squabbles’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

Again :

‘ਔਰ ਸੁ ਕਾਲ ਸਭੈ ਬਸਿ ਕਾਲ ਕੇ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕਾਲ ਅਕਾਲ ਸਦਾ ਹੈ’ ॥

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘All deities are subject to time and therefore subject to Death. He alone is the Immortal Lord (beyond Time and Space)’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak

Again :

‘ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨ ਕਿਰਤਮ ਮਾਨੋ ॥ ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਅਜੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ

ਤਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਜਾਨੋ ॥

ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Do not accept for worship any one created by Him, worship only the Creator. The Lord without a beginning, the Unborn, the Unconquerable and the Imperishable, should be recognised as the Supreme Lord’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Shabad Hazare.

Again :

“ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨ ਦੂਸਰ ਕੋ ਨ ਚਿਨਾਰ” ॥ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Do not recognise any except the One Lord’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Shabad Hazare.

Again :

“ਸਗਲ ਦੁਆਰ ਕੋ ਛਾਡ ਕੈ ਗਹਯੋ ਤੁਹਾਰੋ ਦਵਾਰ” ॥

ਦੋਹਰਾ ਰਾਮਾਵਤਾਰ ॥

‘I have discarded all other doors and have taken refuge noly at Thy Door’.

Guru Gobind Singh in a Dohira to the Ram-avtar Epilogue.

And, lastly :

“ਤੁਮਹਿ ਛਾਡਿ ਕੋਊ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਧਿਆਊ ॥ ਜੋ ਬਰ ਚਾਹੋਂ ਸੁ ਤੁਮ ਤੇ

ਪਾਊ” ॥

ਚੌਪਈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘I will not worship any except Thee. Whatever blessings

I need, I shall get these from Thee'.

Guru Gobind Singh in Chaupai.

We could multiply any number of quotations on the subject, but for the purposes of our inquiry, these should suffice. The last quotation might, however, be noted, specifically. For blessings of every sort the Guru would not go to any other except Him nor would he worship any other. Was it difficult to infer from the above that the Guru's views on the worship of gods and goddesses were clear, emphatic and categorical?

Yet we must not stop at that. The scope of our investigation does not end there. We may look in the records, bequeathed to humanity, for any statements that might have been made by the Guru or his contemporaries on the subject. We might find, perhaps, things having a bearing, direct or indirect, on the subject under review. We should also examine several questions like these: Was the havan conducted, if at all, with the Guru's consent, in spite of his strong views on the subject and for what purpose? Was he a mere spectator, the Brahmins and other worshippers of Durga carrying on the show on their own behalf and in pursuance of their own religious views? How much was he involved, if at all, in the affair of the havan? If we could find clues for answers to the above questions, we might come to the conclusion that there was nothing in the affair of the havan which contradicted his philosophy. Here are a few important facts for the guidance of an honest and a dispassionate investigation.

(1) Historians agree that the havan was in progress in Sambat 1755, and this is exactly the time, according to the Guru's own testimony, when he was engaged

in translating Sanskrit works into Hindi, in the seclusion and the calm of the Naina Devi Hills. 'Ram-avtar' is one of his works which, as stated by himself, was completed on 14th June, 1698 A.D, i.e. in Haar Sambat 1755. The place where the writing was done is given as the base of the Naina Devi Hills, on the margin of Sutlej waters. He writes, at the end, the following familiar hymn :

‘ਪਾਹਿ ਗਹੇ ਜਬ ਤੇ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਤਬ ਤੇ ਕੋਊ ਆਖ ਤਰੇ ਨਹੀ ਆਨਯੋ ॥
ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕੁਰਾਣ ਅਨੇਕ ਕਹੈਂ ਮਤ ਏਕ ਨ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥
ਸਿਮ੍ਰਤਿ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰ ਬੇਦ ਸਭੇ ਬਹੁ ਭੇਦ ਕਹੈਂ ਹਮ ਏਕ ਨ ਜਾਨਯੋ ॥
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਿਪਾਨਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕਰ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਕਹਯੋ ਸਭ ਤੋਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ’ ॥

‘Since the time I took shelter at Thy Feet, I have owed allegiance to no other. Rama or Rahim, the Puran or the Quran, speak different languages but I accept none of them as final. The Simrites, the Shastras and the Vedas all expound different doctrines but I accept none of them as the last word. O my Lord, By Thy Kindness I have said what thou hast caused me to say and there is nothing that I have said myself’.

In the above hymn the Guru categorically declares that he puts his faith in One God only and in none else among mortals, however highly conceived they might be. From this unquestioned testimony of his own, it is easy to draw some important conclusions : First, that he was busy in the production of useful and constructive work during the time of the alleged Durga worship, which, therefore, could not have occupied his mind, at least seriously, even if he was involved in it in some form. Second, his faith in God had remained unshaken and he regarded gods, goddesses, incarnations, holy books as quite insignificant in relation to the Omni-Potent Lord, even during the time the alleged Durga

worship was proceeding.

(2) According to a Persian historian, named Ghulam Muhai ud-Din, a certain newswriter of the period had sent to the emperor the following copy of the Guru's address to his Sikhs on the occasion of the Amrit ceremony. It is dated 1st of Baisakh, Sambat 1756 (A.D. 1699). Its contents should be noted carefully :

‘Let all embrace one creed and obliterate differences of religion. Let the four Hindu Castes who had different rules for their guidance abandon them all, adopt the one form of adoration and become brothers. Let no one deem himself superior to the other. Let none pay heed to the Ganges and other places of pilgrimage which are spoken of with reverence in the Shastras, or adore incarnations such as Ram, Krishan, Brahma, and Durga, but believe in Guru Nanak and the other Sikh Gurus. Let men of the four Castes receive my baptism, eat out of one dish and feel no disgust or contempt for one another’.

The report speaks for itself. It may not be quite accurate in the whole presentation but the point that we want to emphasise here is that even at the Amrit ceremony, the blessings of Durga not only did not figure anywhere but even her adoration was strictly forbidden by the Guru, as reported by a person who was expected to present to the emperor as faithful a report as it was possible for him to do. We should remember that the time of Amrit ceremony was an occasion when the Guru was engaged in founding the Khalsa Brotherhood. If he had sought the blessings of Durga for this Brotherhood, he was expected to sing her praises. At any rate, he could have omitted her name from his address. But he specifically mentioned

Durga in the categories of deities and incarnations whom he proclaimed as quite insignificant in relation to God and as quite incompetent to appeal to his imagination.

(3) Bhai Nand Lal, one of the most brilliant scholars of the Guru's court and a trusted devotee and admirer of the Guru, was present at the Naina Devi Hills during the period of the havan. He wrote a lot on Sikh philosophy and sang the glories of the Guru, in his Jot-Bikas. But there is not a word in his writings about Durga worship. On the contrary, he depicted gods and goddesses as mere slaves at the feet of his Guru in whose praise he wrote poems and then sang them in loving devotion and adoration. And in Jot-Bikas, he particularly stated that thousands of Durgas, Vishnus, Shivas and Indras paid homage at the Guru's feet, for the Guru was exalted beyond measure and they were too small for him. Could he have spoken that language if his Guru had any special regard for Durga, let alone any devotion to her? He was the Guru's trusted admirer and knew his mind more than any other person of his time. He must have, therefore, given expression to views that were in keeping with those of the Guru.

Another court poet, Saina pat, has described, in his Gur-Sobha, among other things, the founding of the Khalsa in a detailed manner. But he has nothing to say about Durga, though it was the most suitable occasion for expressing some gratitude to the goddess, if she had anything to do with the Creation of the Khalsa. Gur-Sobha gives, though briefly, important events of the Guru's life. But he is silent altogether about any havan having taken place. He treated the havan, if it

took place, at all, as wholly unimportant.

(4) It is a very significant fact that the Guru makes no mention at all of the havan event anywhere in his writings, not even in his biography (Bachittar Natak). If it were really an important event as had been made out by the historians and if there was any such thing as securing the blessings of the goddess either for his future work or for his Khalsa, it should have found due prominence somewhere. We have seen in the previous chapter that he had received his orders for founding the Khalsa Brotherhood direct from God with Whom he was in Communion just prior to the creation of the Brotherhood. If Durga had anything to do with that creation, she should at least figure somewhere. In the Natak itself, he describes some of the battles he fought and how bravely his people acquitted themselves. He appreciates the courage and bravery of his Sikhs and at the end of the description of each battle he offers his thanks-giving to God for the victories he had won. But there is never a word in glorification of the goddess who, as is represented by historians, had a strong hold on him and from whom he is alleged to have acquired power and strength. This shows clearly that for him she did not enter into his calculations at all. At so many places, he applauds his warriors for the victories he had won, yet he has no word to say in thanks-giving to any god or goddess.

From the above incontrovertible and most reliable evidence, both factual and circumstantial, the inference is irresistible that the Guru and those of his devoted Sikhs or admirers who had been able to imbibe his teachings fully, did not have any devotional attitude towards the goddess, nor could they have any illusions

about the preposterous claims the Brahmins were supposed to have put forth, viz that the goddess could be made to appear through the havan or that she possessed powers of this or that sort etc. In fact, as stated by so many historians, the Guru ridiculed such notions at the very start of the so-called havan. But human credulity is as ancient as human civilisation. The fact of the matter, perhaps, might only be that the first writer on the havan episode had merely stated that a certain havan was going on at a particular time in a particular place, with the Guru also there in some capacity, and then other writers, taking their cue from him and without ascertaining true facts, had elaborated the event in terms of their own views and beliefs and made a fuss of it all. Otherwise how was it reasonable to suppose, in the context of all that has been said above, that the Guru could have favoured the worship of Durga in the ordinary sense?

But the question arises as to how the havan was permitted and carried on for such a long time and for what purpose? For a satisfactory answer to the question we may now have to look in some other direction for, an inquiry of the conventional type yields the same result every time, i.e., the goddess had never any appeal for the Guru and his trusted Sikhs and, therefore, the question of getting her blessings could not arise. The Guru was wholly devoted to God and ever sought His Refuge for protection and guidance.

This brings us to the examination of a very important aspect of the Guru's conception of God, which is, often, not given due consideration. Of course, this conception can not be different from that of his predecessors. Yet when we examine his writings on the

subject, we can easily discern a shift in the emphasis, in respect of the Attributive Aspect of God-head. Whereas Guru Nanak speaks of Him as the Creator, the Sustainer, the Bestower of gifts, the Compassionate Lord, the Ocean of sweetness, the Forgiver of sins, the Alleviator of sufferings, the Supreme Reality, the Benign Father, the Embodiment of love and kindness and so on, Guru Gobind Singh, in addition, addresses Him as the Subduer of countries, the Destroyer of the armies of the wicked, the Bestower of happiness to the good, the Terrifier of the evil-doers, the Scatterer of the sinners, the Great Death, the Immortal Lord, the Weilder of arms, the Sword, and so on. Here are some quotations from the Jap :

‘ਨਮੋ ਸਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਪਾਣੇ ॥ ਨਮੋ ਅਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਮਾਣੇ’ ॥

‘Salutation to Him who is the Weilder of arms and the Fighter with arrows’.

‘ਆਜਾਨ ਬਾਹੁ’ ॥ ਅਤੇ ‘ਗਨੀਮਲ ਸ਼ਿਕਸਤੇ’ ॥

‘Thy Might prevaieth every where’, and
‘He is the Vanquisher of Tyrants’.

‘ਪ੍ਰਮਾਥੰ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਥੇ’ ॥ ਅਤੇ ‘ਕੁਕਰਮੰ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਸੀ’ ॥

‘He is the Slayer of tyrants’, and
‘He is the Slayer of the wicked’.

ਹਰੀਵੁਲ ਸ਼ਿਕੰਨ ਹੈ ॥ ਹਿਰਾਸੁਲ ਫਿਕੰਨ ਹੈ’ ॥

‘Thou art the Annihilator of the oppressors and the Dispeller of fear’.

The Akal Ustat begins, thus :

‘ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਰਛਾ ਹਮਨੈ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਦੀ ਰਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥
ਸਰਬ ਕਾਲ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਰਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਰਛਿਆ
ਹਮਨੈ’ ॥

‘May the Immortal Lord protect us! May the All-Steel give us His Protection! May we have the protection

of the All-Death! May we have the protection of the All-Steel' I

Here the Guru, speaks of God both as Akal (the Deathless Being) and as Kal (The Death) i.e. One He is the Death of all. He is also addressed as All-Steel because it is the steel that delivers from tyrants and gives power and protection. The Steel and God are thus identical, in a sense. True, He is the Creator but He is also the Destroyer. The Guru is deliberately bringing out the Destructive Aspect of His Personality for his own immediate needs. The Bachittar Natak begins in this way :

‘ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਖੜਗ ਕੋ ਕਰਉਂ ਸੁ ਹਿਤ ਚਿਤ ਲਾਇ ॥ ਪੂਰਨ
ਕਰਉ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਇਹ ਤੁਮ ਮੁਹਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ’ ॥

‘With love and devotion I bow to the Holy Sword. Assist me, thou, O Sword, that I may complete this work’.

The Guru is seeking here the assistance not only of the Creator but also of the Destroyer (the Sword). In the same composition there is frequent use of the destructive weapons like the two edged Sword, the Arrow, the Musket the Mace, the Lance, the Cannon and so on. Arms are not being glorified here for their own sake but to signify that He is the Embodiment and the Source of Shakti (Power). Courage and Bravery. Looked at superficially, the Guru seems to be worshipping the arms. But one who knows him and his teachings will have no difficulty in looking at things in perspective. Arms are a dead metal yet they fulfil a purpose in particular situations and, in that particular context, assume special importance. In that context, they represent an Aspect of God in the symbolic or metaphorical sense so that the martial spirit of man

gets its fulfilment through it. Here are a few quotations from Bachittar Natak to confirm the above :

‘ਯਾ ਕਲ ਮੈਂ ਸਭ ਕਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ .ਕੇ ਭਾਰੀ ਭੁਜਾਨ ਕੇ ਭਾਰੀ ਭਰੋਸੇ’ ॥

‘In this Age as also at other times, there is great reliance in the Powerful Arm of the Sword’.

Again

‘ਕਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਬਿਨਤੀ ਨ ਤਉ ਤੁਮਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਨੈਕ ਰਿਝੈ ਹੈ’ ॥

‘O Death, O Sword, no man could ever please Thee without offering his prayers to Thee’.

Some other similar Attributive Names and Epithets of God, frequently employed, are : ‘Mahan-Kal’ (the Great-Death), ‘Mahan-Loh’ (the Great-Steel), ‘Kharag-Ket’ or ‘As-Ket’ (One having Sword on His Banner), ‘Asipan’ (One having Sword in His hand), and so on. Evidently it is a new technique employed by the Guru to inculcate bravery, dispel fear or cowardice from the hearts of the people and prepare them for the struggle, he was called upon to wage. If the Khalsa was to become a brave nation, it needed that kind of training. From the same motives the Guru caused his court poets to translate Ramayana, Mahabharata and other ancient epics. When the warlike and heroic deeds of the brave mythical heroes of Puranas were recited or sung and their physical strength and courage were eulogised, the people were greatly inspired for heroic action in the cause of holy wars. He himself wrote the ‘Chaubis-avtar’ on the achievements of Ram, Krishan, Brahma, Datta, Kalki and others. These are all merely translations into Hindi poetry with commentaries, here or there, of his own. In Krishan-avtar, he has specifically pointed out the purpose for which these translations

were undertaken :

‘ਦਸਮ ਕਥਾ ਭਗੋਤ ਕੀ ਭਾਖਾ ਕਹੀ ਬਨਾਇ ॥ ਅਵਰ ਵਾਸਨਾ ਨਾਹਿ
ਮੋਹਿ ਧਰਮ ਯੁਧ ਕਾ ਚਾਇ’ ॥

‘I have rendered into the commonly familiar dialect, the 10th chapter of Bhagwat Gita, to inspire zeal for a religious kind of warfare and for no other purpose whatsoever’.

For creating physical strength and courage in his people, he also translated the valorous accounts of the goddess Chandi or Bhagauti and the work is entitled Bhagauti ki Var. There was, once, as the story goes, a long drawn out war between the gods and the demons in which the goddess Chandi ultimately decided the issue in favour of the gods by fighting herself on their side and displaying great feats of courage and bravery. The reader can see that it is an over-simplification to infer from the eulogies of Chandi in the translations that the Guru paid any special homage to Chandi or to any historical personage as such. He extolled the achievements of Chandi in the same way as, for instance, he eulogised the Sword. Not only that. It was as natural for him to employ the word Bhagauti for an Aspect of God as he employed Sword for Him. The other Sikh Gurus too had never hesitated to bring into service all names that people had associated with God or an Aspect of God. It was only the heart that should be in communion and therefore it did not matter what name was employed to express Him.

‘ਜੇਤਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇਤਾ ਨਾਉ’ ॥ ਜਪੁਜੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ॥

‘What He hath created is His Name’.

Guru Nanak in Japji.

All that existed was His manifestation, revealing His

Glory and was therefore His Name. On the tablet of the Universe there was no letter except His Name. Therefore He could be invoked by every Name. As Allah Ram, Kabir, Saligram, Thakur, Khuda, Murari, Krishan Ishar, Hari, Beethal, Wasdev etc. were all God's Names, so also could Bhagauti, Kalka or Durga be treated as God's Name because it could represent an Aspect of God's unlimited Personality. When the Guru glorified Bhagauti in the Var entitled Bhagauti Ki Var, he glorified an Aspect of God revealed through Bhagauti. The Var spoke to him quite all right the language of his God, the Embodiment of Power, Courage and Bravery. That language was the need of the hour and so he gave his reverence to the idea behind it. No historical or mythical Bhagauti could ever be the object of his worship.

Also, in the Guru's writings the word Bhagauti itself cannot be stretched so far as to mean Durga in every case. It also means sword as is clear from a line in 'Bhagauti Ki Var' itself :

'ਲਈ ਭਗੌਤੀ ਦੁਰਗ ਸਾਹ' ॥

'The goddess Durga took up the Bhagauti (sword)'. Earlier, Bhai Gurdas had referred to Bhagauti, thus :

'ਨਾਮ ਭਗੌਤੀ ਲੋਹ ਘੜਾਇਆ' ॥

'The ordinary steel was shaped into what is called the sword'.

Again, in the Holy Granth too, the word Bhagauti is used in another sense,

'ਇਤਿ ਸੰਜਮਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਕਿਨਹੀਂ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਮੁਦ੍ਰਾ ਮਨੁ
ਮੋਹਿਆ ਮਾਇਆ' ॥ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

'No one hath realised Him through devotional practices of a superficial kind. People wear God's Marks while their minds are attached to Maya'.

Guru Arjan in Parbhati.

There seems a digression here. But it was necessary to go a little out of the way to elaborate this point, as the use of the word Bhagauti for the title of the Var was often put forward as another argument in favour of the thesis that the Guru was the worshipper of Durga. In the zeal for proving something it was sometimes forgotten that the thing might have some other connotation or interpretation.

We are in a position now to come back to the subject of havan that we were discussing. In the circumstances in which the Guru was placed by Providence, an Aspect of God as the Embodiment of Courage, Bravery and Strength had to be stressed over and above other Aspects, for the time being. For the worshippers of Durga, these very qualities and many more were present in their goddess also and so there was an agreement between them and the Guru on the main objective before both of them, although the outlook of Durga worshippers was narrow and clouded. For the Guru, if the Sword could represent God, so could Durga. There was nothing in names provided the perspective was not blurred. Was it not conceivable for two parties with different ideologies to meet on the same platform if they had some common objective, for which both could meet and pull together? The Guru wanted his Sikhs to become brave, fearless, courageous and strong and the worship of God would produce that result. The worship of Durga too could do the same if it were conceived as a symbol for God and did not refer to any historical figure. In that wide sense Durga and God became one. It is true that the worship of the One Supreme Being was the only true worship for the Guru. Yet he knew also that symbolic worship in a suitable form could be an aid to the worship of the

object symbolised. It was really due to man's own imperfections that he must resort to relating the Omnipresent God with limited abodes, limited forms and specific names. The embodied human mind, as we shall discuss in the last chapter of the book, naturally finds it most difficult to meditate on an object which cannot be visualised in concrete terms. It cannot get rid of its own mental quality that needs something tangible as a means of support for concentration. No idea of music can be formed by a person who has never heard each of the different notes in a distinct way. Conscious of this human limitation, Guru Ram Dass had said, in Sorath :

‘ਸੋ ਹਰਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਗੰਮੁ ਹੈ ਕਹੁ ਕਿਤ ਬਿਧਿ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਰੂਪ ਨ
ਰੇਖ ਅਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟ ਕਹੁ ਜਨ ਕਿਉਂ ਧਿਆਈਐ ॥ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਹਰਿ
ਅਗੰਮੁ ਹੈ ਕਿਆ ਕਹਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਈਐ’ ॥

‘Unfathomable is the Lord, say, how is one to attain Him? He has neither Form nor Lines (features) and is Unseeable, then how is He to be dwelt upon? He is Formless, Pure and Unknowable, then which of His Attributes are to be sung?’

So the name or the form can be employed symbolically as means for the realisation of the objective but when the end is achieved the means will be dropped off. Lamps have a utility in the midst of darkness, but as soon as the sun rises the lamps are no longer required. The worship of gods and goddesses in the symbolic form has, therefore, a justification if these are conceived as different Names or as Aspects of the same God-head. That which is really One can be represented in diverse ways, representing His diverse Aspects. He is the Creator, the Destroyer, the Compassionate One, the Forgiver and so on. If a god

represents any one of these Aspects of God-head, then this Aspect alone may be dwelt upon by the devotee at any one time. When a single Aspect engages his mind, the other Aspects may be supposed to have been held in abeyance for the time being. Thus, in that case too, it is He who stands before the devotee though not in a full measure. Common notions of poly-theism, however, are repugnant to human feelings and understanding. To limit the Limitless to a figure or to an image or to a stone cannot but make a man rootless and lead to a mental debasement and a degrading narrowness of vision. He is, then, left in mental grooves out of which he cannot extricate himself. This sort of worship of gods is idolatory which must be condemned and which the Gurus always condemned very strongly.

‘ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਪੂਜੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਂਗਉ ਕਿਆ ਦੇਹਿ ॥ ਪਾਹਣੁ
ਨੀਰਿ ਪਖਾਲੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਬੂਢਹਿ ਤੇਹਿ’ ॥ ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘What can one get out of the worship of gods and goddesses? If one washeth the stone gods in water, they would sink. How then, could they save others’?

Guru Nanak in Sorath.

In this narrow sense there can be no stronger condemnation of the worship of an idol, or an image or a god than that contained in the writings of the tenth Guru. He wrote to Aurangzeb in his Zafar Nama, thus :

‘ਮਨਮ ਕੁਸ਼ਤਨਮ ਕੋਹੀਆ ਪੁਰਫਿਤਨ ॥ ਕਿ ਆਂ ਬੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਤੰਦੁ ਮਨ
ਬੁਤ ਸਿਕੰਨ’ ॥

‘I am opposed to the crooked Hill-men because they are idolaters and I am an idol breaker’.

We have given some of his acknowledged utterances in respect of idol worship in the last chapter. One can see from these that there can be no severer condem-

nation of idolatory than what is contained therein. The central theme running through his teachings always is that God-realisation is the truest aim of life. The principal methods of ensuring it are purity of life and constant invocation of the Name of God. One must learn to look into one's soul to discover Him there. Now to come back.

So, when the Brahmins made the proposal for a havan as a homage to Durga and the havan entailed devotional practices of spiritual value as well, how was it inconceivable that the Guru should permit the havan when the same provided an opportunity for his people to get inspiration and strength for the purposes he had in mind? There were other considerations too in the Guru's mind. At the Naina Devi Hills, a motley crowd had gathered, composed of, besides the Brahmins, the Guru's devoted Sikhs, his court poets, his admirers and well wishers among the Hindus and a good many newly converted Sikhs who had not yet shaken off their old beliefs, including faith in Durga's powers. Kangra Hills were already the stronghold of the worshippers of Durga but many people from other parts of the country too visited the place. People have continued to visit the place up to this day for paying homage to the goddess and there are several sikhs with weak convictions among them. It is said that even Maharaja Ranjit Singh had once sent valuable offerings as presents to the Temple of Jagan Nath. It shows how great the hold of Durga has been on the minds of men. Gur-bilas of Sukha Singh, written one hundred years after the creation of the Khalsa, is another example of this hold. As we have seen already, he had accepted the main story of the havan in its highly distorted form. Many

other Sikhs too had, like him, come back to the old ways, far removed from the ideals of the Guru, inspite of clear Sikh teachings in this regard. One can imagine how fanatically steeped in Durga cult many people must have been in the Guru's own time. We have before us the case of a poet of the Guru's own Court having faith in that cult as is exhibited in his Work named Chandi-charittar (exploits of Chandi), which is a translation in Hindi of an old Work in Sanskrit. Though he was then with the Guru, he had not yet imbibed Sikh teachings fully and had his own notions and prejudices, as is clear from some of the passages in this Work. He first states that he has done the translation for amusement but later he writes : 'whoever reads or hears this composition for any object, he will surely have it'. An other line in the statement shows that he has some object in translating the Work, though he does not specify it. This is what he writes, 'I have translated a Work which has no equal. O Chandi, grant the object which I have in translating it'. Evidently, this man believed in the powers of the goddess. So also there must be many more men in the Guru's camp who were still influenced by the Hindu thought and they must have supported the havan idea. Surely, the Guru had such people in his mind when he permitted the Havan, but he knew quite well that the conclusion of the havan would disillusion waverers and strengthen his cause, as the result of the havan was a foregone conclusion. It was for these different considerations that the havan ceremony went its own way. The interests in the havan were different for different people. The Guru has himself stated in the Bachittar Natak, as to which Durga he was engaged in worshipping. We have already referred to it, thus :

‘ਤਹ ਹਮ ਅਧਕ ਤਪਸਿਆ ਸਾਧੀ ॥ ਮਹਾਕਾਲ ਕਾਲਕਾ ਆਰਾਧੀ’ ॥

‘There I performed great austerities. The Kalka I worshipped there was the Great-Death (God)’.

It was through the worship of this Kalka that he had attained Union with Him and heard His Voice when others were busy in the worship of some goddess. The Guru and his devoted men did not have any interest in the havan beyond what is said above. The Brahmins and other devotees of Durga were allowed free hand to carry on their worship in the way they liked. It was perhaps because of this that historians could not make a distinction between the approach of the Guru and that of the Durga devotees who, it is conceivable, might have indulged in practices that made the havan a thing of ridicule. And, what a pity that in course of time all this show came to be linked solely with the Guru !

CHAPTER XI

The Khalsa Brotherhood

“ਪੰਥ ਚਲੈ ਤਬ ਜਗਤ ਮੈਂ ਜਬ ਤੁਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ” ॥
ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Thy Panth, O Lord, shall come into being with its Message for the World if Thy support is extended to me’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

We have already stated that some time after the Call had come, the Guru came down from the Naina Devi Hills to the plains and proceeded to give effect to the Message of his Master. He had invited Sikhs all over the land to gather in Anandpur to hear from him this Message and in pursuance of the invitation a large number of Sikhs gathered at Kesgarh, near Anandpur. Also, as required of them by the Guru, they came in the natural unshaved condition. The Guru was seriously occupied with his own plans, but there was now absolutely no anxiety of any kind on his face. Rather, he looked bright and cheerful. He had before him the vision of a free Khalsa Brotherhood, the pure and the emancipated in heart, the champions of freedom, yoked to the service of God, in short, supermen for whom the love of God and the service of humanity were their

life's mission. It was the vision (image) of a truly God-conscious people who were to live in the constant presence of God and for whom God was to be seen in the inner-most beings of all and therefore, His worship and service meant the worship and service of man. The Guru was going to create the Panth that was to express itself in spiritual humanism, flowing from its faith in God. The Message had impressed upon him the first and foremost lesson that the Khalsa was not to be allowed to degenerate into anything sectarian, fighting for its own rights and privileges, but would possess a catholic and universal outlook so as to become a truly God's Religious Order. Service rendered to others was to be related to Him with an attitude of devotion, humility and self-effacement so that the strength to serve came from the love of and devotion to God. The inspiration for social, religious and political work was to be always spiritual. Just as it was in the nature of the river to flow and of the sun to shine and spread light, so also from a self-less and God-conscious Khalsa, service was to flow naturally and spontaneously. The sense of mine or of my community and attachment even to good deeds were to disappear. No selfish motives and no communal aims were to be entertained in the work undertaken and whether it ended in success or failure, in joy or sorrow, in pleasure or pain, it was not to affect the Khalsa's own mental condition. When every effort was to be related to Him there could be no defeat or failure. The results were not to be measured by standards, set by worldly wise men, because when the Khalsa became really free with the freedom of God, he would not have illusions about the so-called success or failure and would remain firmly wedded to the path of truth

and justice, whatever the difficulties in the way. An apparent defeat would rekindle in him the fire of true service and re-animate him for greater effort and more religious zeal. For instance, if the Khalsa, in the context of those times, was to become the living embodiment of the determination of the people never to give up the battle of truth and righteousness until the wicked people were beaten and smashed, then, victory and nothing but victory was to remain his objective, however long and hard the road might be. Yet this victory was to be conceived as something above all material connotations, because without this kind of victory, life was not worth living. This aspect, as we shall see in connection with the Amrit ceremony, was epitomised through a slogan or a form of salutation embodying the mission of his life. Here is the slogan :

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ ॥

‘The Khalsa belongs to God and God is ever victorious (so is the Khalsa ever victorious)’.

The slogan later became a form of salutation to imply that the Khalsa was the army of God, bound among themselves by faith and fellowship and engaged in winning victories for Him. The shining qualities of courage, faith, dauntlessness, combined with selflessness, were to be engraved in the marrow of the Khalsa so that he would refuse to admit defeat at any time and would continue to believe staunchly in ultimate victory. He would ride over victories and not allow victories to ride over him, since he would retain his ardent spirit in all situations upto the end of life and so there could be no defeat for him. When the work undertaken was surrendered to Him in a devoted way, the desire for victory in any narrow

sense or for material fruits, did not enter the mind, because for a votary of truth freedom from desire for reward was itself a great reward.

‘ਜੀਤ ਹਾਰ ਕੀ ਸੋਝੀ ਪਰੀ ॥ ਤਉ ਇਸ ਘਰ ਕੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਪਰੀ’ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

‘When the true significance of victory or defeat is realised one knoweth the meaning of life’.

Guru Arjan in Gauri.

We shall see that it was victory in this sense, in the Guru's mind, when he wrote to Aurangzeb, his Zafarnama (epistle of victory). He said in it, he had won because he had successfully sown the seed that would germinate and bloom, in course of time. Battles won or lost in the material sense were of little consequence. The victory of the Khalsa lay in the fact that the spell of Mughal invincibility, cast on the minds of men, was broken.

This, briefly, is the image of the Khalsa which the Guru's vision had stipulated. A day before the first of Baisakh of that year i.e. Sambat 1756, he appeared before a huge gathering of Sikhs at Kesgarh and sprung on it a frightful surprise. With a naked sword in his hand and in a loud voice he told the wondering crowd that the ‘Sword’ had need for human blood and demanded heads to satisfy itself. Then, brandishing the sword in his own hands, he inquired if any one was prepared to place his head under the ‘Sword’, at the altar of Dharma. Now it was an extra-ordinary call, besides being sudden and unexpected, and people could not easily comprehend its true significance. The Guru did not mean that they should offer to die merely for him. That kind of call had already been given, and answered too in the most heroic way.

Sikhs in thousands had offered themselves for sacrifice at his beck and call. So many battles had been fought and won, first during the time of his grand-father, Guru Hargobind, and then in his own time. He had exerted a powerful and direct personal influence on them, during the course of war. His own unique position had inspired and stimulated so many mighty warriors who worked with him. In fact, he had acknowledged, even before the creation of the Khalsa, his profound appreciation of the unswerving loyalty and unflinching support of his Sikhs. Here is one of his hymns in praise of them :

‘ਜੁਧ ਜਿਤੇ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁਦਾਨ ਕਰੇ ॥
 ਅਘ ਓਘ ਟਰੈ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਫੁਨ ਧਾਮ ਭਰੇ ॥
 ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸਵਿਦਿਆ ਲਈ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਭ ਸਤ੍ਰ
 ਮਰੈ ॥ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈਂ ਨਹਿ ਮੋ ਸੇ ਗਰੀਬ ਕ੍ਰੌਰ ਪਰੈ ॥
 ਸੇਵ ਕਰੀ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਮਨ ਭਾਵਤ ਔਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸੁਹਾਤ ਨ ਜੀ ਕੋ ॥
 ਦਾਨ ਦਯੋ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਭਲੋ ਅਰੁ ਆਨ ਕੋ ਦਾਨ ਨ ਲਾਗਤ ਨੀਕੋ ॥
 ਆਗੈ ਫਲੈ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਦਯੋ ਜਗ ਮੈਂ ਜਸ ਔਰ ਦਯੋ ਸਭ ਫੀਕੋ ॥
 ਮੋ ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਤਨ ਤੇ ਸਿਰ ਲੋ ਧਨ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੋ’ ॥
 ‘ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਹਮਾ’ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘It is through the grace (kindness) of the Sikhs that I have won all my victories and have been able to grant gifts to others. It is through their grace (favour) that my troubles have been overcome and my prosperity hath increased. It is through their favour, that I have acquired knowledge and my enemies have been exterminated. Through their favour have I acquired honour, otherwise there are millions of ordinary mortals like myself. It is a great pleasure for me to serve them, no other service pleaseth my heart. To grant gifts to them is the right thing, to grant gifts to others seemeth of no real

avail to me. To bestow gifts on them beareth fruit in the next world and bringeth honour in this, and to bestow them on others is of no use at all. Let my body, my mind, my head, my wealth and all that is mine be dedicated to their service'.

Guru Gobind Singh in 'Khalsa Mehma'

The Sikhs had thrown themselves, heart and soul, into the movements he had sponsored and given abundant proof of their loyalty and devotion to him personally. The present call was of a different kind and of an impersonal nature, in pursuance of and in keeping with the Commands he had received at the Hills. He was bringing into being the Khalsa Brotherhood and the Vision had warned him against letting the Brotherhood become a communal organisation working not for God but for its ownself, serving its own narrow interests. It had asserted that communities had appeared from time to time with high sounding principles and had later reduced themselves into sects and denominations, quarrelling with each other, for their own domination. That was to be avoided now. The great Brotherhood was not to be allowed to contract itself into a sect nor its comprehensive principles were to be narrowed into mere monastic distinctions. The Guru, therefore, demanded heads not for himself, nor for his sake, in the narrow personal sense, nor for any particular country or community, nor for this or that particular cause, nor even for his own Dharma but for the 'Sword' (God) or for Dharma in the sense in which Guru Tegh Bahadur had already set an example. That Guru had died not for any communal cause but to protect a faith that was not his own, in the strictly narrow and literal sense. It was in this wide sense that dying under the 'Sword' or sacrificing the head for Dharma

was to be interpreted. Previously, when the Sikhs offered their heads to the Guru there was in it a lot of personal element. But this element could not remain a permanent factor and was to disappear when in course of the time, the Guru himself disappeared from the earthly scene, in the physical sense, and with that the loyalty and devotion to his person would become inoperative. The Khalsa that was being founded had thenceforth to be ready to make the supreme sacrifice (i.e. the head) for God, or for Dharma i.e. for any righteous cause. Dying at some one's beck and call might have its own glamour but this kind of dying could be for a bad cause too and could be courted thoughtlessly or rashly as well. Clever leaders could create false notions of religious merit and produce fanatics among followers who would brave death in a spirit of resignation. Dying in any such way was not in the Guru's mind when he demanded a head. Nor would he throw off human life purposelessly. He considered life as a sacred trust and a precious gift of God. He would not ask his people to commit suicide, as it were. Death was to be courted for Dharma and heads were to be surrendered to the 'Sword'. He wanted them to realise that when they placed their heads under his own physical sword, the same representing, should be considered as surrender to the 'Sword' (God) i.e. for God's causes which the Guru's sword symbolised. The thirst the sword had for human blood meant that God wanted sacrifices to save Dharma, from tyrants and oppressors. The aim before him was to found a race of men who should be ever ready to stand against evil in every shape and form. The Khalsa was to become the world-wide movement, consecrated to the service of all, irrespective of caste,

colour, country or creed and was to work for integration and synthesis. True the Khalsa was going to wear a distinctive look also but the same was intended merely to symbolise that movement. So when the Guru demanded the surrender of a head to the Sword or for Dharma, it was a perfectly impersonal demand, as impersonal as the Sword is or as Dharma is. The demand was made specifically for the head because a man who could lay down his head, would make any sacrifice for Dharma. Surrender of the head to the 'Sword' symbolised complete effacement of self in the service of God.

But the congregation could not understand so easily the wide meaning implied by the Guru's amazing challenge. Some people thought that the Guru's mental disequilibrium, as noticed at the Hills, had not yet been shaken off completely, otherwise why should he make a meaningless demand of that kind. Those of them for whom life was a very dear thing, in the material sense, were filled with horror. of course, there was nothing unnatural about it. But the Guru's mind was working deliberately in a certain direction and he wanted to sink his lessons into the consciousness of his men, through a dramatic performance so as to heighten their receptivity. He was first presenting riddles and then unfolding them gradually, through concretising them. It was really a masterly handling of human emotions that were to be channelised in the direction of Dharma, the term to be now endowed with new sense of values, as explained above.

The Guru repeated his demand two or three times without evoking immediate response, because most people were in utter confusion. At last Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore, rose to offer his head at the altar

of Dharma. It is difficult to say whether its implication in true perspective had or had not dawned upon him. But he was ready to die and that was enough, so far as he was concerned. He believed that he was offering to die at the call of his Master and it must be for God i.e. for God's causes, otherwise his Guru would not have made the demand. He expressed his regret that he made the offer so hesitatingly. The Guru took him inside a tent which had been suitably prepared earlier and so skilfully as to create the impression in the minds of the audience that the demand was made in all seriousness, otherwise many would have offered their heads merely in bravado or just for winning the Guru's favour and the people's applause. The Guru's sword fell on the head of a hegoat, stationed already within the tent. The blood flowing out of the tent simply confirmed that the demand was made in earnest and Daya Ram had fallen. The Guru came out of the tent and asked for another head. The audience was now convinced that Daya Ram had been killed actually. The Guru repeated his demand. This time it was Dharm Dass, a Jat of Delhi, who stood up to make an offer of his head. He too was taken inside the tent to repeat the earlier performance. This process went on for three more times and the Sikhs that offered their heads were Mohkam Chand, a washerman of Dwarka, Sahib Chand, a barber of Bidar, and Himmat Rai, a potter of Jagan Nath. The Guru made no further demand for a head. His purpose was served all right with the five heads, already offered as these five could well represent the Khalsa movement. He came out of the tent with his sword sheathed, followed by all the five Sikhs supposed to have been killed. They were all beautifully dressed

exactly as he himself was in the saffron dyed garments, including turbans, and looked exactly like him in outer appearance, form and glow. The audience had thinned comparatively but was huge still, even though many people were still stricken with terror and amazement. They could not understand what all that was leading to. On finding all the five back again they wondered all the more and felt utterly stupefied. They had believed that the Guru had killed them but now all of them were before their very eyes. Did the Guru play a trick with them? They could not believe it. Some thought that they were first killed and then revived by the power of the Guru. They had yet to be told that the Guru had really killed them but in another sense. He had killed their earthly existence in the metaphorical sense and given them a new spiritual birth, consecrated to humanity. The head of he-goat had gone to signify that the meekness of the lamb was being replaced by the roar of the lion. The Guru had the rare gift of expressing great ideas through figures, parables and symbols. He was now creating a race of lions to be yoked to the service of mankind. All this was made clear the following day at the Amrit ceremony. By the gift of the nectar (Amrit) he was causing men to be reborn in order to enter the kingdom of God. Their mere earthly and mortal existence was being shaped and transformed into the spiritual. The spotless garments they wore were designed to reflect the purity of the soul, a purity as perfect as that of the Master. In fact, they were going to become exactly his image, in the spiritual sense. The whole episode of the day had a spiritual meaning. The audience was told to disperse and re-assemble the following day i.e. on the first of Baisakh.

The Guru and the five Sikhs who had offered their heads re-appeared that day with beaming faces. There was a glow of satisfaction in their eyes which was an index of the great Message that now possessed them. The Guru seated himself on a raised platform and his companions were told to stand up before him. There was an iron vessel placed before him in which he caused water to be poured. It was during this period that Mata Sahib Kaur passed by with some sugar crystals (patashas) in her possession. These were also put into the vessel. Kneeling by the side of the vessel, the same was stirred by himself with a two-edged sword (Khanda). While the stirring went on, the sacred hymns prescribed for the ceremony, namely the Japji of Guru Nanak, the Anand of Guru Amar Dass and the Jap, the ten Swaiyyas and the Chaupai of his own compositions, were recited over it, so that the form of baptism or the nectar (consecrated water) that was being prepared had in it the Guru's Word, the steel and the sweet patashas dissolved together. Although it was only a form of a ceremony yet this also had a beautiful symbolic meaning which the Guru explained later. The Khalsa was taking a new birth and no birth was possible without both father and mother. Since it was a birth of a spiritual kind with the Guru as father, Mata Sahib Kaur's role as the spiritual mother was quite in the fitness of things. The Khalsa was to enter the arena of service and so must carry with himself not only the iron will and determination represented by the steel but also humility and sweetness represented by the sugar crystals. Without the latter, mere iron will could well be a very dangerous thing. The Khalsa was going to become a saint-soldier or rather a soldier-saint. It was necessary that he should

be strong both in the physical and the spiritual sense. If he were to carry the heart of a lion the same heart should possess love, humility, sweetness, contentment also in the richest measure. The manliness, bravery, courage and strength of the spiritual father should combine harmoniously with humility, sweetness and self-denial of the spiritual mother. Not that the father lacked any of these qualities. It is only a way of emphasising the dominant characteristics of both. This aspect was further emphasised by the Guru declaring that in future the initiation ceremony would be the Amrit, prepared as above, replacing the charanpauhal way, hitherto in vogue. The Khalsa was going to become a Nation pledged to the service of humanity. A dynamic machinery, infused with a crusading spirit and devoted to God and humanity, was being set up in motion for all times to come. It was being designed so as to generate power and strength for a struggle against every evil. Every member of the Khalsa Nation must be brave, courageous and strong of will. Charanpauhal represented spiritual strength all right, derived from the Guru's feet i.e. through becoming the Guru's servant, surrendering the self completely to him. But now the times had changed, and this necessitated a form of initiation symbolising the change more truly and more in keeping with its spirit.

The five Sikhs were told to kneel on their left knees and look into the Guru's eyes. This too had a symbolic meaning. They were going to enter the soul of the Guru and become exactly like him. The Guru, in turn, fixed his own gaze into the eyes of each of them to fill them with himself and bless them with spiritual

loftiness equal to his own. The reader can see the direction in which the Guru was working up. Though he had already chosen the best of men yet he was designing them to be perfect like himself. Initiation ceremony, therefore, should be considered as a great event in one's life, entailing great responsibility and should be gone through with eyes open. The Guru never thought in terms of numbers but of quality and that too of the purest variety. The emphasis always was on the purity of the soul. Those pure in heart and having a universal outlook could alone be considered the Khalsa of his dreams. The five he had chosen were already ideal Sikhs but were being further blessed by him through psychological processes. He threw showers of Amrit into their faces requiring them to speak aloud, thus :

‘ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ’ ॥

‘The Khalsa belongs to God and Victory is ever God’s’. The knots of hair on their heads were also annointed with Amrit to make sacred the hair which were to become the most important symbol of the faith. The head is the seat of wisdom and so it must be truly and doubly blessed. Then the five Sikhs took, in turns, deep draughts of nectar, five times each, from the same vessel to signify the Brotherhood of equality. All distinctions were now gone. All of them had become brothers without distinction of high or low. Not only that. They were now equal with the Guru, for, kneeling before his own disciples he asked them to prepare the Amrit in the same way as he had done and give the same to him. This really was his most notable achievement :

‘ਵਾਹ ਵਾਹ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪੇ ਗੁਰ ਚੇਲਾ’ ॥

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਦੂਜਾ ॥

‘Blessed is Guru Gobind Singh who is the Guru and the disciple at the same time’.

Var Bhai Gurdas, the second

He saluted the Khalsa and made it as his successor. He merged himself in the five chosen ones, whom he called his five loved ones. The leadership of the Panth was invested in the Panth itself. The Sangat became the Guru or the Khalsa became the Guru Khalsa. His memorable words on the occasion are contained in the following two lines :

‘The Guru is the Khalsa and the Khalsa is the Guru, and ‘whenever there are five Sikhs assembled in a congregation, know that I am ever there’.

It was really a milestone in the traditional relationship between the Guru and his Sikhs. Personal Guruship was being abolished, the Guru divesting himself of every rank or privilege. The Guru became equal with the Sikhs. It would, however, be wrong to conclude from this phenomenon that it was designed to give to his Sikhs merely a charter of equality, fraternity, and fellow-ship or to make them lead a democratic way of life. That had already found expression in the teachings of other Gurus. The thing emphasised here was that purity was an essential requirement from the Khalsa. He was to represent the Guru and so he must be as pure as the Guru himself, moulded completely in the Guru’s image. Undoubtedly, it was an arrangement for continuity of Guruship but it stipulated an ideal Khalsa, a superman that could truly represent the Person of the Guru. True, it also represented faith in democratic ideals and the collective wisdom of the people, but the same could be sustained only through the selection of the best men in the moral and spiritual

sense. The best five were chosen because they were to represent the Guru Panth. They were accepted as most qualified to baptise the Guru himself as also others because they were conceived as models of purity. They all became Singhs (lions) now and converted others also into lions. Even the Guru's name was changed from Gobind Rai to Gobind Singh. Jackals became lions, thenceforward. Dregs of society became heroes and leaders. Their minds were freed from the shackles of ages, which the priestly class had built up round them. They were now God's people to establish the kingdom of God on earth by fighting out evil wherever it existed.

The Guru, in his long address to the Sikh congregation stressed several other important points visualised by him to make the Sikh Nation strong and healthy. Here they are: They must worship one God, discarding the worship of idols, tombs, cremation-grounds, gods and goddesses etc. and must shed off superstition of caste, birth and creed. There were to be no incarnations, no bathing in Ganges or other pilgrim stations in a superstitious way. All creeds were to be fused into one of sacrifice and service. The first sentence in the report of Aurangzeb's newswriter in respect of the Guru's speech on the occasion should be noted carefully. We have given this report already in the previous chapter. Here we state only the first sentence in it to emphasise a point of supreme importance. Here it is: "Let all embrace one creed and obliterate earlier differences of religion".

It shows that the Guru was ever thinking in terms of bringing about God's Religion on earth and wanted that the Khalsa Panth, he was creating, should actually

possess qualities for championing that Religion. The Panth should become the champion of Truth, Justice and Freedom. Its greatness was to be measured not in terms of power for any individual nor even for the Nation as a whole but in terms of service it rendered to humanity. The Khalsa would not want worldly honours for distinctions and eminence. Even at the height of eminence he would remain humble, filled with the spirit of sacrifice. Love of the country and service of the weak and the oppressed, without distinctions of race or creed, would become his life's mission. He would live by the sweat of the brow and would never beg alms in charity. He would rather set apart a tenth part of his honestly earned income for the service of others. The Khalsa shall love his own wife more and more and shall consider it an abominable sin to look with lustful eyes on another's wife even by mistake or in a dream. He shall never smoke nor ever take intoxicants. He shall have nothing to do with those who killed their daughters or advocated satti (This injunction had abundant value at that time, as evil practices like these were very common in India, then). He will avoid altogether, besides the Masands, the Ram Raias, the Dhirmalias and the Minas (the followers of Ram Rai, Dhirmal and Prithi Chand) as they had become disruptive forces, creating sects and destroying the very foundations of Sikhism. The Khalsa will not take meat of an animal cooked in the Mohammadon fashion (Rigidity in the matter of meat diet had been relaxed because of war conditions, yet meat cooked in the Muslim way was still forbidden). It appeared to the Guru a clear sign of political subjugation as also of an abject mental slavery that people should accept the mode of life forced on them by the foreign rulers. In

consequence, their distinctiveness as a nation had gone. They had lost respect for their own culture and the Guru wanted to give them back their culture and through it their soul. We have already examined this aspect of Indian life in the first chapter.

This was the Khalsa of the Guru's conception and he gave him a distinctive outer form as a declaration of faith in that conception. The form prescribed five Ks—long uncut keshas (hair), a comb for keeping the hair clean, a Kachha (a knicker-shaped underwear), a Kara (bracelet of steel for the wrist) and a kirpan (sword) hanging on the left side.

We propose to examine here a little more closely the purpose the outer form was intended to serve so that its true significance was not lost on those who had accepted it as a necessary requirement of faith. The Guru was creating the Sikh Nation or the Khalsa Brotherhood as an organised unit based on discipleship and on that account, it was the most natural thing for him to have given it its distinctiveness. Religion, according to him, was not merely a set of views and doctrines but a way of life to be lived and practised. It was not a mere intellectual process of listening and learning the teachings of the Gurus but of translating them into life, intended to be lived in the service of humanity. He had created the Panth which means 'The Way' and all those who treaded on 'the Way, were organised into a Panth, bound together so as to become a force to work for Dharma in the world. Organisation he knew, enhanced very much the scope, the possibility and the effectiveness of the work before it. It was in this wide sense that the principle of organisation was adopted as a part of Sikhism. Sikhs were required

not only to attend to their individual character but to prepare for responsibility to serve through a corporate body of the Panth. No doctrines or teachings could be expected to live for long unless these were perpetuated through an organisation that practised them in life. There was, therefore, need for a corporate body in which these should be practised and preserved and through which its history, traditions and a distinctive culture should be built up. The Sikh people had already undergone a course of discipline in the hands of the first nine Gurus and the process was now completing itself when Guru Gobind Singh was bringing into being the organised Khalsa Panth. But this entailed certain additional disciplinary outfit in the form of five distinctive symbols to give the Khalsa an outer form. And on the completion of the process he declared :

‘ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ ॥ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮੇਂ ਹਉਂ ਕਰਉਂ ਨਿਵਾਸ’ ॥
ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ ॥

i.e. ‘The Khalsa is in my image and I reside in the Khalsa’.

Panth Parkash

He wanted the Khalsa to be in his own image. He had himself merged in God and had become one with him. He was, in fact, the image of God in as best a form as any human being could ever be conceived of, and so his Khalsa too must become God's Image. The Khalsa was to resemble the Guru in every way, including the outer form which was created to link him with the Guru so that the Guru's personality became all along operative within the Khalsa, controlling his whole being and shaping it into something divine. The Guru thus placed a great responsibility on the Khalsa both in his individual capacity and as a unit of the Nation. He gave to the Khalsa, through these symbols, a signal of a new

birth, the spiritual birth as distinguished from the mere physical or earthly birth, and this Guru Nanak himself had visualised, thus :

‘ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਜਨਮੈ ਗਵਨੁ ਮਿਟਾਇਆ’ ॥ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘By being born at the True Guru’s, all wanderings of coming and going disappeared’.

Guru Nanak in Ram Kali.

The Guru became the spiritual father, Mata Sahib Kaur the spiritual mother and Anandpur the place of spiritual birth. But after this birth, if it were to bear fruit, there must be a complete surrender to the Guru so that he could freely enter within the soul to give it a truly new birth. He had conferred a gift of the symbols to serve as a link to unite the Khalsa with him, the most perfect being, possessing dynamic powers. He had worked on the minds of men through the hypnotising power of these symbols. Therefore, he declared :

‘ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਯਾਰੋ ॥ ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦੀਓ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰੋ ॥

ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੀ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ॥ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਕਰਉ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪਰਤੀਤ’ ॥

ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘So long as the Khalsa retains his individuality, I shall give him all glory. But when he deviates through misguided Brahminical ways, I will not trust him’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Sarb Loh.

The Khalsa must live as the Guru lived otherwise he would not be in the Guru’s image. The personality of the Guru was a model of a saint soldier and this should become the guiding star for the Khalsa too. After the baptismal ceremony, the Sikh got wedded, as it were, to the Guru and the symbols were an open declaration of that marriage. The symbols must generate cohesion and bind every Sikh with the Guru and through him

with others of the Brotherhood, so that the Panth became a force to work more effectively, generating transcendental capacity of service of mankind. Just as flags and uniforms are devices, employed in the army to create a proper psychology to cement people and to bind them to each other, as also to the cause the army had in view, so also the outer religious form prescribed to the Khalsa was intended by the Guru to constantly wake up the vivid picture of the personality of the Guru and to surcharge him through and through with that personality, so that the form of the wearer ultimately reflected the inner life. When that actually happened, the love of symbols was bound to come with it and then the temptations life offered would be more easily overcome. We may explain.

Bhai Joga Singh of Peshawar was a good Sikh prepared to carry out the Guru's orders to the letter. His parents came to request the Guru for the grant of a brief leave for the boy's marriage. As the marriage could not be postponed, the Guru allowed him to go, inspite of war clouds hanging over the horizon. But soon after, it seemed necessary to recall him. A letter from the Guru directed Joga Singh to proceed forthwith and the same was delivered to him during the performance of marriage ceremonies. He ran back without even completing the necessary ceremonies. Of course, it was never the Guru's intention that his orders be carried out, too literally. He only meant that Joga Singh should come without undue loss of time. But Joga Singh overdid it and so was overpowered by vanity. At Hoshiarpur he lost his balance altogether. He was overcome by lust and was on his way to a courtesan. Sin had come to tempt him and he yielded before it. Yet his love for his Master and the Master's

image, reflected through the form he was having on his own person, saved him. The form with him had become a reflection of the Guru's personality. The outer form and the inner life had become one with him, through there was temporary aberration too.

In sharp contrast to it, a sakhi is told of another Sikh, a goldsmith, who was admired by everybody for efficiency and honesty. The Guru too complimented him and asked him if he had any fault. The man was so much puffed up with praise from all quarters that he could not see that he too was, like all other men, subject to error. The Guru wanted to test his character through offering him temptations. He gave him some gold ostensibly without weighing but which had actually been weighed earlier. The weak man yielded before the power of money. He was quite a good Sikh and had put on the Sikh forms as well, but he was not yet fully surcharged with the Guru's personality, in respect of his inner life. Now to come back.

The Guru was really thinking in terms of abolishing the personality cult. At the Baptismal ceremony he had declared that the Panth would be the Guru in future. It would take the place of the Person of the Guru and would work in the Guru's name and on his behalf. History bears testimony to the fact that after this declaration the Khalsa treated itself as the Guru's representative and whenever necessity arose it met in a full congregation to take decisions on questions of religious and political interest and these decisions were supposed to have the Guru's sanction. Also the Khalsa was so designed as to look, even in the outer form, exactly like the Master, the intention behind it being that the Khalsa was the Guru and so must become

like the Guru in appearance, thought, word and action. The Master had appeared before the world in the most natural outer form and his Khalsa was to adopt the same form so as to be like him, but this form must reflect the inner life. The Guru wore long hair (Keshas) as did the rishis of old, the hair representing spirituality and saintliness of those rishis. The comb was a simple necessity for keeping the hair clean and tidy and so became automatically a symbol of moral purity, which was the true basis of spirituality. The kirpan (sword) on his side served as a symbol of power, self-respect, dignity and service. The Kachhera (nicker) obviously is a useful underwear ensuring briskness of movements and thus symbolised quite suitably an active and a chaste living. An iron ring on the right arm was construed as a sign of constraint so very essential for a soldier who had many temptations to overcome. The whole presented a beautiful and impressive picture of a saint-soldier in the making.

It is not out of place to point out here that among the five symbols, the wearing of long hair (Keshas) was considered as the most important requirement, even before the Khalsa Brotherhood had actually come into being. The Guru's unbounded love for the Keshas could be assessed from so many stories of the gifts of his hair and comb to his devotees like Budhu Shah for the meritorious services rendered by them. As against this, the Hill Rajas' offer to join the Brotherhood provided they were permitted to go without Keshas was declined. We may quote Bhai Nand Lal for his views on the subject.

‘ਬਚਨ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਕੋਈ ਸਿਖ ਕਾ ਬੇਟਾ ਹੋਇ ਔਰ ਮੋਨਾ ਹੋਇ
ਜਾਵੇ, ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਸੁਕੀ ॥ ਅਰ ਜੋ ਮੋਨਾ ਸਿਖ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਇ ਤਿਸ
ਕੀ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਹਰੀ’ ॥

"The Guru has said that if a person, born in a Sikh family, shaves his hair, the roots of his religious life wither as it shows no real attraction for Sikhism, but if a shaven person becomes a Sikh, the roots remain green, because he must have become a Sikh, through conviction".

Also, the word 'Sikh' here is to be interpreted in the wide sense, as explained above. The love of Keshas signified the love of the Guru and all he stood for.

The symbols were thus designed pregnant with deep meaning. They had similarity to the things symbolised and imparted instantly the intuitive realisation of those things, if accepted in good faith. They were considered essential for the life of a soldier-saint, the Guru himself presenting the ideal picture of a man in whom the qualities which the symbols represented were present in the best form. Yet, the symbols could become aids to religion only if narrowness of perspective did not cloud vision or create divisions and exclusiveness. If the spirit in which they were originally conceived died out then they became handicaps to religion and stopped progress. It is because of this that we see in the utterances of the Guru as also in those of his predecessors a strong denunciation of symbols that had lost their vitality and had degenerated into something that destroyed the spirit of religion and alienated man from man and man from God. Symbols and outer forms of religion were helpful provided people were sincere about them. Therefore the Guru constantly reminded the hollowness of mere outward form divorced from inner life. Without that inner life, he considered the symbols as no consequence at all. He said.

'ਰਹਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਮੋਹਿ ਕੋ ਸਿਖ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਨਾਹਿ' ॥

‘A Sikh is dear to me not because of his name or form but because of his character’.

Not numbers but quality and staunchness in convictions were the things that really mattered to him. Symbols were intended as means or as aids for promoting moral and spiritual development. These were never conceived as ends in themselves nor had they any inherent efficacy in them. When they did not fulfil the purpose for which they were symbols they became dead and lifeless things. The hypocrisy and superficiality that, in course of time, gets attached to the symbols cannot but be condemned and this is how the Guru condemned it :

‘ਜੇ ਜੇ ਭੇਸ ਸੁ ਤਨ ਮੈਂ ਧਾਰੇ ॥ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜਨ ਕਛ ਕੈ ਨ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ॥
ਸਮਝ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਭ ਜਨ ਮਨ ਮਾਹੀ ॥ ਡਿਭਨ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸਰ ਨਾਹੀ’ ॥
ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Those who put on false garbs, have no worth at all, in the estimation of God’s men. Know ye all, once for all, that no one can find the Supreme Being through a false exterior’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak

Again;

‘ਭੇਖ ਦਿਖਾਏ ਜਗਤ ਕੋ ਲੋਗਨ ਕੋ ਬਸਿ ਕੀਨ ॥ ਅੰਤ ਕਾਲ ਕਾਤੀ
ਕਟਯੋ ਬਾਸ ਨਰਕ ਮੋ ਲੀਨ’ ॥ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Those who make a false show of garb to influence others for personal ends, are butchered with a knife and their souls are thrown into the hell’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak

Again;

‘ਸ੍ਵਾਂਗਨ ਮਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸਰ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ ਖੋਜ ਫਿਰੈ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਕਾਹੀ’ ॥
ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Let people go wherever they like, they will find that God is not to be found in the outer garbs.’

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

His approach, as we have already seen, was universal based on the conviction that all religions were, good and useful. Let Muslims and Hindus remain wedded to their own faiths, only they should become good Muslims and good Hindus. With this liberality and catholicity of outlook on religion, he could not conceive of symbols as ends in themselves. The symbols should always be related to inner life in the same way as tears were related to grief or as words were related to their meanings. But when tears were mere cloaks for hypocrisy or when the meanings of words were ignored, they were then not only meaningless but harmful. Symbols should, therefore, be considered as only aids for promoting moral and spiritual life.

It is, however, a great pity that religions, in course of time, start place greater emphasis on symbols than on the inner life for whose sake symbols were created. It is forgotten that symbols, by themselves cannot produce spirituality. On the other hand, adherence to moral and spiritual values for which the symbols stand, is bound to create love for the symbols too. If, for instance, the Sikhs loved their Guru who had made a gift of these symbols to them, it could not but generate a genuine respect for symbols which the Guru himself wore. History confirms that whenever the Sikh character was high, the Sikhs insisted rigorously on the baptismal vows and symbols. They were persecuted and hunted out of forests yet they remained steadfast to the outer form. But when they were corrupted by power and luxurious living, as in the days of Sikh rule, they considered the vows and

the outer form too hard to accept. They had lost their anchor and had become superstitious about God and His Worship. The unchallengable fact always is that in any moral crisis it is the character man builds up that saves him. Temptations allow no time to think as they enter into the mind unexpectedly and suddenly. When, for instance, bribe is offered, one has to decide quickly what course of action is to be adopted. A weak man is soon over-powered because a decision has to be taken on the impulse. It means goodness must become a part of man's being so that he is drawn habitually towards it. Unless evil has lost all its attractions, even comparatively good men fall easy prey to temptations which are many and varied. Therefore symbols alone will not save unless they are related to inner life. No actor in a drama who puts on merely the garb of the king will actually become the king.

The Guru had, once, dramatised for ridicule a show presenting a donkey clothed in the skin of a lion, let loose to frighten other animals. The donkey was pursued for some time till it brayed out of fear and was recognised and given a good beating. What the Guru wanted to emphasise was that he had given his Sikhs the lion's outer form. They must throw off the old ways and begin life anew. Mere form would not save them unless the same was related to the Guru's personality.

The Sikhs were intended by the Guru to become the true replica of his unique personality reflecting him in the life they lived. The world has witnessed how the Sikh Nation was, for a time, completely revolutionised when that personality had a firm hold on them. During the Mughal rule, they were known to be strictly truthful, honest and reliable, so much so, that

if a Sikh ever made a statement in a court of law, it was accepted as true. Muslim historians having a strong political bias against them called them dogs to spite them, yet they recognised the fact that they had very high moral and ethical standards. It was their form and distinctiveness that had given them the necessary cohesion and this had produced strength that was employed in the service of mankind. It should also be remembered that distinctiveness with them was never the same thing as exclusiveness. On the contrary, this distinctiveness was intended by the Guru to kill every form of exclusiveness and to foster kinship with all. We have already seen that when the Master's Call came to him, this aspect of organised Church was particularly stressed, because otherwise religions degenerated into something unholy and harmful. It was for the Panth to see if the Guru's intentions in this regard were amply fulfilled so far as his Panth was concerned.

We are now in a position to examine carefully the implications of the Guru's address to the Sikh people whom he had converted into a Nation or a Brotherhood of a unique type. The Sikhs had already fed the community on the Advaita philosophy but now the same philosophy was being concretised in the Brotherhood. All men were equal because God resided in them. This theory of the identity of Atma with the Paramatma was converted into a factual realisation in life, i.e. it expressed itself in all aspects of human activity—religious, social, political and economic.

In the purely religious sphere, baptism itself, as stated above, was made open to men, women, peasants, labourers, the learned and the illiterate alike, irrespective of their race, creed, sex or caste. Any five Sikhs could baptise others so that no particular priestly

class would remain to exploit the masses by posing as the custodian of the faith. The theory of Divine right was exploded for all time. No person must arrogate to itself the position of the Guru and no special class must have the monopoly of Divine Knowledge or the right to perform religious rites and ceremonies.

In the social sphere, no invidious distinctions would be allowed between man and man. We have witnessed crores of people in this land being treated as mere worms, on the basis of caste distinctions, through a disgraceful institution that was supposed to have the sanction of religion and its holy scriptures. Men created by God were, in the eyes of the so-called high caste people, untouchables and unapproachable and even unseeables i.e. their very sight caused pollution. But the Khalsa would not tolerate that unholy state of affairs. For him the whole humanity was one. Every man was to be honoured not in terms of his birth or caste but because he was man. Caste and untouchability could have no place in God's Scheme of things, because One Life pulsed in all beings. Not only that. The same Life Principle animated all knowledge and every social ethic. The Atma (Spirit) was the Supreme Reality and so all that existed was the Book of God's Revelation. 'Of Him we are and unto Him we return' must be accepted as the basic principle of life. The Guru had said :

‘ਮਾਣਸ ਸਭੇਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ’ ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘All men, though appearing different under different influences, were essentially the same’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

Again :

‘ਏਕੈ ਨੈਣ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਨ ਏਕੈ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਨ ਖਾਕ ਬਾਦ ਆਤਸ ਔ
ਆਬ ਕੋ ਰਲਾਉ ਹੈ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

“All have the same eyes, ears, bodies and their builds, all are made of the same elements—earth, air, fire and water—and therefore should be regarded as equal”. It should be noted that the Atma, the image of the Parmatma does not figure in the list.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

The institution of a free kitchen and free Diwans (Sikh gatherings) were really intended to give a practical shape to the doctrine of the unity of human life. All men were entitled to serve and partake food from the Guru's kitchen, without any distinction whatsoever. On that account all Sikhs met, dined and prayed together. In fact, it pleased the Guru immensely if they all availed of the free kitchen with a view to obliterate differences of caste or untouchability. The langar (free kitchen) was to become the leveller of castes and social inequalities. There was the standing tradition that whoever wanted the Guru's blessings, should first partake of food in the common kitchen. Kabir, Ravi Dass, Farid and other saints, though considered as men of low caste, had already been given the highest place of honour by the inclusion of their compositions in the Holy Granth, which the Sikhs regarded with the highest respect, equal to that given to the person of the Guru. The Amrit had now destroyed all distinctions on the social plane. The Khalsa, after his birth, was required to lose his old ways of living. At the baptismal ceremony, he was told to lose his Kirt, Kul, Karam and Dharam. This statement needs some elaboration : Losing the Kirt means to consider every profession

noble. People had wrong notions about the dignity of certain callings and the inferiority of certain others. Labour was not regarded to be as noble as, for instance, holding the pen or preaching higher values of life. This was a fallacy, more so in respect of manual labour as a means to earn a living. By the Sikh Gurus considered it rather of superior value because of the benefit accrued through it to the soul. Guru Nanak, at the close of his life, had lived on a farm in Kartarpur. Of all men, he had chosen Bhai Lalo, the carpenter, as his very dear companion. A Sakhi is told of Guru Gobind Singh having once called on an attendant to bring some water for him. The attendant being away, another handsome youngman, the son of a noble man, came forward with a shining glass of water, held in delicate hands. It was clear that he was not accustomed to a manual work of any kind. The Guru declined to take water from hands that did not know the value and the dignity of manual labour. He loved to apply himself also to lowly acts of labour which he always regarded as worship, a true Yajna. He had an instinctive kinship with those who tilled the soil, hewed the woods and built houses and therefore attracted agriculturists, mechanics, workers and builders. For him they were the salt of the earth. They, in turn, worked in the missionary spirit, specially in the Guru's kitchen where they cooked food and cleaned utensils in a devotional spirit. Christ had, under similar impulses, said : 'cleave the wood and find me there, raise the stone and there I am'. It is quite true to say that those who lived on the toils of others killed their creative faculties besides becoming harmful to society. On the other hand every form of labour is sacred if done as a duty and in a spirit of worship, as Guru Amar Dass had said :

'ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਭ ਵਾਪਾਰ ਭਲਾ ਜੇ ਸਹਜੇ ਕੀਜੈ ਰਾਮ' ॥ ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੨
'Every work is noble if performed in the right way'.

Guru Amar Dass in Wadhans.

The Khalsa will also lose his 'Kul' i.e. he will neither have the pride of the so-called high descent nor the shame of a low lineage. For him, actions and not caste or descent would determine status in life. Further, the Khalsa will lose Karam (empty ceremonies and rituals) as also Dharam (communal or sectional loyalties) and develop catholicity and universality of outlook. This aspect has already been dilated upon, earlier.

In the economic sphere, equality in the sense that all must possess wealth in an equal measure is neither feasible nor desirable. It is not a virtue to produce a race of idlers. Every man must work for himself to earn an honest living by the sweat of his brow. Conditions must, however, be created in which every form of exploitation of man by man is eliminated. Is it not a sin to amass huge fortunes. In the context of poverty prevailing all round? Also wealth, specially ill-gotten wealth, proves a curse by the corrupting influence it can exercise over man in so many ways, as affirmed by Guru Amar Dass :

'ਮਾਇਆ ਧਾਰੀ ਅਤ ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਬੋਲਾ' ॥ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥
'Man of wealth is extremely blind and deaf'.

Guru Amar Dass in Gauri.

And Guru Nanak says :

'ਪਾਪਾਂ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ' ॥ ਅਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥
'Wealth is not possible without sinful ways'.

Guru Nanak in Asa.

True religion requires not only that nothing is to be possessed which dispossesses others of their due share but also sharing one's honest earnings with the needy

and the deserving besides employing it in the service of the entire mankind. It was this consideration in his mind when the Guru enjoined that the Daswandh (tenth part of the income) should be spent for good causes and in the Guru's name. If that were done, wealth would no longer remain as the sign of spiritual stagnation. It would then become a means for the attainment of life's higher purposes and thus get sanctified. What really counted was the purpose for which it was being striven after. So long as it was treated as a means for development, in the physical and moral sense, it did not hinder the cause of religion. After all, poverty was a curse and perhaps a greater curse than wealth. It killed self-respect, deprived opportunities for growth of body and mind, produced ill health and disease and caused widespread unhappiness, suffering and misery. It should never be tolerated in the fatalistic way as if it were the dispensation of God. Rather, it should be fought out and eradicated. Yet, man was to be considered as more precious than money. It was entirely wrong to measure him in terms of his material advancement. He must learn to rise above the material so as to fulfil himself.

Next, we will examine the field of politics. It is here that a lot of confusion of thought prevails. Long and unending controversies have, in all ages and in all countries, been provoked over the vexed issue of 'State' and 'Religion'. Politics is considered a dirty game because unscrupulous men come into power and prominence and exploit the position thus gained for personal aggrandisement. It is not very wrong to say that politics has become the last resort of scoundrels and therefore so many good people have honestly come to believe that it is good to remain away from this

dirty mud. 'Render unto Caesar the things which be caesar's and unto God the things which be God's' is being freely interpreted to mean that a man of God must not enter into the political affairs of the country and should confine himself to the purification of his own soul. Before the Sikh Gurus, this view was taken to the extremes and, in consequence, India was turned into a fertile ground for hordes of invaders from outside for their political conquests, religious persecutions and conversions. Guru Nanak ridiculed the Yogis for running away from secular duties, thus :

‘ਸਿਧ ਛਪ ਬੈਠੇ ਪਰਬਤੀ ਕੋਣ ਜਗਤ ਕੋ ਪਾਰ ਉਤਾਰਾ’ ॥

ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ॥

‘If the Sidh Yogis who had built their inner self were to hide themselves behind the mountains, who would save the world ?’

Var Bhai Gurdas.

If politics was a dirty game it was all the more necessary to purify it by the touch of religion. Running away from the battle of life was more or less a selfish escape and therefore unholy. If a man were drowning in a pond, some one must enter it to save his life. The Sikh Gurus had secularised religion itself i.e. the performance of secular duties became a part of the religion. For Guru Gobind Singh, his politics had become his religion in action. The two swords of secular and spiritual powers had been worn. The daily Sikh prayer began to seek God's Blessings for the Khalsa to win his victories in all fields, including politics.

‘ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਹਰ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਫਤਹਿ ॥ ਦੇਗ ਤੇਗ ਫਤਹਿ ॥ ਪੰਥ ਕੀ ਜੀਤ’ ॥

‘Victory to the Khalsa in every field, victory to him in the field of economy and in every battle waged against

evil ! Victory to the Panth everywhere !'

The Guru meant to say that the Khalsa would fight his battles against every form of tyranny and for this task he made him so powerful that he could assert with pride the claim :

‘ਸਦਾ ਲਾਖ ਸੇ ਏਕ ਲੜਾਉਂ ॥’

‘I shall cause a single Sikh to fight against an army of a lakh and a quarter.’

As secular duties were a part of Sikh Religion, the Gurdwaras and even the Akal Takhat, the highest Sikh seat of authority, were converted into centres of political activities, so that, in course of time, the Gurdwaras acquired a theo-political status. Sikh History, Sikh doctrines and Sikh traditions inextricably related spiritual values of religion to every form of activity, including politics, which otherwise, degenerated into something soulless. The Gurus had realised that only truly religious minded men had the power to change the established order, built on wrong values, because they alone could base the practice of politics on high principles of religion. In his Zafarnama to Aurangzeb, the Guru had said : ‘Thou art used to conduct thy statecraft through deceit and diplomacy while I believe that it ought to accord with high principles of ethics and the dictates of conscience’.

Only seers and saints could be truly sensitive to the sufferings of society because they considered these sufferings as their own. They remained completely detached and could withdraw, if need be, for a while to replenish themselves with spiritual strength and then come back to the post of duty, to guide and serve. They loved all alike and were completely detached, being wedded to truth alone, and hence they were best fitted to govern the State also :

‘ਤਖਤਿ ਰਾਜਾ ਸੋ ਬਹੈ ਜਿ ਤਖਤੈ ਲਾਇਕ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਜਿਨੀ ਸਚੁ ਪਛਾਣਿਆ
ਸਚ ਰਾਜੇ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਇਹਿ ਭੂਪਤਿ ਰਾਜੇ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਇ ਦੁਖ
ਹੋਈ’ । ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

‘Persons fit for the throne should rule, and they alone were fit who had recognised the Truth. The so-called kings wrapped in duality were not fit as rulers, (from their rule) emerged pain and sufferings’.

Guru Amar Dass in Maru.

This is true democracy and it comes about when people are awakened, to choose their rulers. And this will happen when they are politically conscious not merely of their rights and privileges but of duties done to promote the good of the whole community. Thus, true democracy is the reflection of an awakened people and is an expression of their faith that every man is holy because God dwells in him. Its objective is therefore man. Communism or socialism or any other ism may have its appeal in economic or social terms. Communism, for instance, challenges the existing evils in the economic and political systems. It fights for a juster economic order and for the rights of workers and labourers. But it rebels against God and has no need for human personality. It reduces man to a mere economic function, forgetting that man does not live by bread alone. What good there is in possessing the whole world if the soul is lost? Every theory built on violence, dictatorship or denial of human dignity and individual freedom is bound to breed inhumanity. The objective of mere service of the people is not enough. It should be dictated not by any theory but by the consciousness of the living oneness of human life. This is the meaning of democracy in the idealist form, though in the present conditions of society it may be difficult of attainment. The aim, however, should always remain

clearly before the people.

We have expressed above, the view that politics should flow from religion. Surely, it is a Sikh view but it has given rise to a lot of misunderstanding among the Sikhs themselves, often leading to bitter controversies. This view, when amplified, means that Sikh religion invites the individual Sikhs to serve in all fields of human activities, including politics. It also allows the Khalsa Brotherhood as a group to espouse high politics if that be necessary for the vindication of some basic Sikh principle or even for some high politics of a universal nature. For such lofty purposes the use of the Gurdwaras also cannot be prohibited. But all this should not be stretched so far as to mean that the Sikh community, as a group has its own politics. This approach clearly breeds communalism. All Sikhs as such do not have unchangeable politics as they have their unchangeable creed. Politics covers a long range of subjects which are subject to the changing conditions of society. All Sikhs, for instance, are not equally rich nor are they equally poor and therefore cannot be expected to view economic matters in the same fixed manner. The glory of Sikhism, as we have seen, is its universality which has always worked to knit diversity in caste, creed or race into one unit. To think in a small way about communal representation in this or that form cuts at the very roots of Sikhism and is wholly inconsistent with what it stands for. If religions degenerate into communal groups quarrelling with one another over petty matters they become a curse, instead of a boon. It is a paradoxical situation that instead of proving a unifying factor between man and man they have become the cause of quarrels, hatred and dissensions. It is a situation in which complete

separation of State policy from the religions of the peoples composing the State is not strictly possible. Not only the civil law and the marriage code but even the mode of killing for food (Jhatka or halal), the mode of salutation (salam or namaste), the language (Sanskrit, Arabic, Hindi or Panjabi), honorific words (Shri or Janab), the Calendar (the Vikrimi or the Hijri), the medical system (Aurvedic or Yunani) become lively religious issues that so often spark off communal strifes. Under these unhappy circumstances of sectional fanaticism, it is difficult to define where the jurisdiction of religion ends and that of politics begins. There can be no precise interpretation of religion in this atmosphere and no two men will use the term in the same way. Any issue—linguistic, cultural or social—on which communities have divergent views can be taken as a religious issue. It is really strange that whereas banning of cow slaughter or swine slaughter becomes a religious issue, the banning of alcoholic drinks does not. Wearing a turban or a hat becomes a religious issue but behaving in a decent, sweet and humble manner is not. Why should these small matters be made excuses for communal quarrels? If it was some people's religion to eat in a certain way, let them do it. But they did not have the right to force the same on others, who might equally have the religious right to eat in the opposite way. Let each follow his own belief allowing others to follow theirs. There is no other way if religion is not to be reduced to a mockery and a shame. The claim of a religion as being divinely established is justified only if it brings salvation and redemption to His Children in the next world but makes them first virtuous citizens here. This can happen only if all men learn to respect the views and the religious suscepti-

bilities of others. No mere law can achieve anything unless people know the meaning of true religion. Then alone will the State as the guardian of temporal order function autonomously in its own sphere.

We have given above quite a comprehensive image of the Khalsa. We close this chapter now with a hymn of the Guru in which he gives their image as he had visualised it. Here is the hymn :

“ਜਾਗਤ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਸਜੈ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਗੋਰ ਮਤੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ॥
ਤੀਰਥ ਦਾਨ ਦਯਾ ਤਪ ਸੰਯਮ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਨਹਿ ਏਕ ਪਛਾਣੈ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਗੈ ਘਟ ਮਹਿ ਤਰ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਿਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਣੈ ।”
ਭੇਤੀ ਸਵੈਯੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘He who, night and day, enshrineth in his heart the Light of the Ever-Awake Lord and entertaineth no thought of any except the One Lord, who keepeth full faith in Him and loveth Him whole-heartedly, who putteth not faith even, by mistake in fasting, worship of cemeteries, cremation grounds, and Yogis’ places of sepulchers, who recogniseth only One Lord, putteth not any mistaken confidence in pilgrim-stations, alms on auspicious occasions, non-killing, penances and austerities, and in whose heart the perfect Light shineth, he is the Khalsa (the pure one) who hath realised the Pure One’.

Guru Gobind Singh in 33 Swaiyyas.

CHAPTER XII

The Khalsa fights out for Dharma

‘ਸੂਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਚਾਨੀਐ ਜੋ ਲਰੈ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ’ ॥ ਮਾਰੂ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ
‘Truly brave is he who fights for Dharma
(righteousness).’

Bhagat Kabir in Maru.

After the creation of the Kha'sa, the lull on the war front continued for about one year more. Yet, the Guru was continually engaged in making preparations for the coming battles. His vision and insight were clear and he told the Khalsa army to be ready for war, against the mughal, that seemed to him inevitable. He had already sent his Sikhs in all parts of the land for the propagation of the Sikh faith and for the consolidation of strength for the coming ordeal. His call created a movement and the response was great and spontaneous. His own personality, his great teachings and the noble cause that had the amelioration of the country's down-trodden as its objective, had an appeal that went straight to the hearts of men and they flocked to him from all sides. Yet, the task before him was full of difficulties. The Mughal had still his terror deep down the hearts of men. The empire he had built

up was considered almost omnipotent. The Hill Rajas were inwardly opposed to the Guru for their own reasons. They loved ease and comfort. They had privileges to enjoy and knew full well that the Guru was out to deprive them of these privileges. That was bound to happen if the liberation movement, he had started, succeeded. They could see that when he had denied himself even the privilege attached to him automatically as the leader and the Guru of the Nation by taking Amrit from the representatives of the Panth in the same way as any ordinary Sikh would, how could the Rajas retain for long their own privileges as feudal chiefs? True, he enjoyed great respect and influence among his followers but these, they knew, were derived from the service he rendered to them in various ways. The Rajas were opposed to him on grounds of religion too. He had attacked their cherished beliefs, their caste system and their gods and goddesses. There was, yet, another reason that made them sulk continually. He had won battles against them and this with the help of men whom they were accustomed to look down upon as mere dregs of society. He had smashed their well organised and properly equipped armies and brought to them shame, humiliation and disgrace. They were too small-minded to forget all this and felt extremely sore. In this mental condition they were constantly thinking of retrieving their lost position, by avenging themselves on him.

The Guru, some however, did not want to fight on two fronts, if it could be avoided. His keenly observant eye had seen the inevitability of a clash with the Mughal or Mughals. Not that he considered the Rajas as a force for the good. He knew that they too were an evil, enjoying wealth, power and prosperity at the cost of the

people and were on that account rendered as mere tools in the hands of the rulers. Yet he could not help appealing to them to accept Amrit and all that it implied and prepare for struggle against the enemies of the people. But how could they allow themselves to be guided by a man with whom they had nothing in common? The Guru spoke to them about the woes of the people and of the disunity in their ranks because of so many social, economic and political factors. He reminded them of the abject mental condition and utter demoralisation which the fear of the Mughal had caused everywhere. But they were not in a mood to listen. They had accepted the Mughal as the unchangeable Will of God. And they had now started to look upon the Guru as more dangerous than the Mughal, because they knew, they had the art of pleasing the latter in a hundred ways while they could please the former only through sacrifices, rendered to the people. so, they were ever looking for an opportunity when they should remove him from out of their way.

Once, the Guru was in Dehradun, out on a hunting excursion. Two hill chiefs, Alim Chand and Balia Chand, attacked him. They were lying in ambush, in the hope that as he was unprepared and had with him only a few Sikhs at the time, he would be easily overpowered and captured. But they had not taken into consideration the Guru's indomitable courage and the devotion of his men. They did not know that in the ultimate end it were men behind the guns that mattered far more than the weapons they had. Balia Chand was killed in the encounter and his companion fled to save his life. When the hill-chiefs heard the fate of these men they were much upset. They met in a council and decided to approach the emperor for his help. They represented

o him, through the viceroy of Sirhind, that they had failed to restrain the Guru and if the emperor did not act in time, and firmly, he might later find the situation more difficult to deal with. The petition was suitably worded so as to incite the emperor to immediate action. It said, among other things, that the Guru and his Sikhs were becoming strong militarily, that they had stored vast ammunitions and were aiming at founding a kingdom to be called the Khalsa Kingdom, that they had engaged in service dacoits and robbers who had, through plunder and loot, caused havoc in their territories and made the life of peace loving citizens most miserable. The Viceroy added to this petition his own endorsement, which said that the Guru had on several occasions rendered help to the opponents of the imperial forces and had caused their defeat and rout at Nadaon and Guler etc. The emperor's orders soon arrived, through a special messenger, telling the Viceroy, quite clearly and categorically, that the power of the Guru must be destroyed without delay. In pursuance of these orders the Viceroy despatched a large army under Painde Khan and Adina Beg (Din Beg). The Rajas' army by itself was also very large. A bloody battle was raged in which Painde Khan died at the Guru's hands in a single combat. Prince Ajit Singh showed unparalleled valour, skill and courage and caused a rout of many hill-men. Din Beg found it advisable to retreat and the invading army, thus demoralised, fled for life. The Sikhs pursued the enemy upto Ropar.

But the Rajas could not forget their long cherished hatred for the Guru. They again met in a council to take stock of the situation and to evolve some effective future programme. They came to the conclusion that

they should act independently of the emperor. They hoped to win on the strength of their own combined forces. First, they sent an ultimatum to the Guru that there was a long standing rent against him, which he should pay immediately or in default vacate the city. The Guru told them that the land was purchased by his father and if they used force without any justification he would have no choice but to meet force with force and the responsibility for the loss of life and property would be wholly theirs. There after the Guru was attacked and the battle that followed was most furious, yet there was no victory on either side. The Rajas then decided upon a blockade which too went on for some months without yielding any result. An intoxicated elephant was also employed to force the way into the fort. Its body was all protected with steel and a spear was attached to its forehead. According to the plan, the animal was to attack the gate while the army was to cover up its back. One, Vachittar Singh, was told to face the elephant which he did remarkably well. He shattered the animal's head armour by the stroke of his lance and in the resulting confusion the animal fell upon the rear guard and killed many men. The Sikhs took full advantage of the enemy's dilemma and inflicted heavy losses. Yet the end of the blockade was not in sight. The Rajas were distressed at their helplessness and decided upon a strategy at the suggestion of, Parma Nand (familiarily known as Pamma), a priest at the court of the Raja of Kahloor. A paper hung from the neck of the image of a cow read that the Rajas sincerely regretted the loss on both sides and desired a compromise immediately, so that the purposeless fighting was stopped. It also added that a unilateral retreat on their part

would be too humiliating and derogatory and if the Guru vacated Anandpur the siege would be raised and then he could come back after some time if he so desired. Some Sikhs thought that the proposal was reasonable since it had really become a question of prestige with the Rajas and it was not wrong to agree to the proposal. But the Guru was not convinced. He had tried the Rajas so many times. However, there was in his mind the Mughal too who was expected to reinforce the invaders. So he came out in the open ground leaving Anandpur in the hands of some of his brave and trusted man. Nirmohgarh, a place only two or three miles from Anandpur, seemed to him suitable for his next operations, in the event of an attack which he personally never ruled out. The Rajas, in spite of their vows, lost no time in falling on him. The Sikhs fought back bravely and succeeded in pushing the attackers back. In the meantime, as the Guru had anticipated, reinforcement under Wazir Khan, the Viceroy of Sirhind, arrived. This was in pursuance of another representation the Rajas had made to the Viceroy, who, in turn, felt, it was the most opportune time to strike. The situation was very critical for the Sikhs but even then their morale was high. The Guru crossed the Sutluj river and retreated to Basali. Dharmpal, the Raja of Basali, was his admirer and friend. He felt happy that he had an opportunity to serve the holy Guru. Wazir Khan did not consider it profitable to pursue the Guru in the new situation. The Hill Rajas also felt satisfied that they had, after all, got rid of him. After a few months' stay in Basali, the Guru marched back towards Anandpur. In the way, he halted at Bhabaur, whose Raja was his friend. There

he learnt that visiting Sikhs on way to Anandpur were frequently molested by the villagers of Kalmot. The offenders were suitably punished. On return to Anandpur, he found the city very badly damaged by the invaders.

The Rajas were now inclined to be, more or less, on friendly terms with the Guru as Pamma had advised them to employ diplomacy and tact in dealing with him. He spoke to the Guru too that he was keen on a compromise and suggested to him to visit Rawalsar and talk things over with the Rajas so as to bring about some permanent understanding. He spoke of the common danger and of the abject slavery, all of them suffered from. The Guru agreed, met the Rajas in Rawalsar and had a heart to heart talk with them. The Rajas seemed satisfied and declared their wholehearted friendship for the Guru. But the pity was that they did not have a clear vision and could be easily misled by this or that person. They possessed unclean hearts with a narrow and selfish outlook.

Once, the Guru was in Kurkushetra where he had gone, on the occasion of the eclipse fair, to enlighten people, enveloped in ignorance and superstition. The Hill Rajas were also there. Although hostilities had stopped, through an understanding reached at Rawalsar, both parties having agreed to pull together, yet the Rajas had again become hostile for this or that grievance. Two Muslim generals, Saiyad Beg and Alif Khan happened to be proceeding from Sirhind to Lahore and they had with them a huge army also. The Hill Rajas thought it was the right time to strike. They hired the generals on huge payment for an attack on the Guru who at that time had only a few men with

him. The Guru was then near Chamkaur, when the attackers fell upon him unawares. The Sikhs fought back well. Saiyed Beg had often heard about the Guru's holiness but when on this occasion he saw him face to face, he was instinctively drawn towards him and ultimately came over to his side. In fact, he surrendered himself and all he had at his feet and became his ally in this fight. When Alif Khan found himself alone he retired from the contest and the conspiracy failed miserably, once again.

Yet the Rajas did not give up all hope. They soon invaded Anandpur, rather thoughtlessly and without proper planning, and were, in consequence, repulsed with heavy losses inflicted on them. In this predicament, they thought of the Muslim rulers once again. They told them that the Guru's activities were prejudicial not only to the Rajas but also to the empire and that the government itself should now take an active lead in dealing with the Guru and not leave things to the Rajas alone, because they had completely failed to restrain him. In particular, they emphasised that the Guru was determined to destroy the Mughal regime and therefore it was time to curb him effectively and adequately. The emperor was, of course, occupied in Deccan to deal with disturbances there, yet he became very apprehensive, on coming to know of the representation of the Rajas. He sent orders to the Viceroy of Sirhind and Lahore to take immediate action. So a huge army under Saiyad Khan was despatched to bring the Guru a prisoner. It was declared to be a holy war against the 'infidels' and a call had gone to the Muslims to join for the glory of Islam. The Rajas were, of course, partners in this crusade. The Sikhs all over the country came to know of the danger and

rushed to Anandpur to strengthen the Guru. Saiyad Beg and his friend Maimun Khan had already become the Guru's admirers and therefore they fought for him. With Prince Ajit Singh they met the advancing army and played havoc with its troops. It may be pointed out here that Saiyad Khan, the commander of the invading, army, had inwardly a liking for the Guru. He was the brother of Nasiran, the wife of Saiyyad Budhu Shah, and through her influence had become the Guru's admirer. When he was actually face to face with the Guru he lost the will to fight, such was the influence of that mighty man on discerning people. He was conquered mentally and in consequence deflected from the imperial army. His place was taken by Ramzan Khan. Fierce fighting ensued, in which both sides suffered heavy losses. Maimun Khan was killed. The Sikhs were already outnumbered and though they fought all right and with determination they could not hold on for long against heavy odds. Anandpur was vacated and therefore plundered by the invaders. The victorious army celebrated its victory in merry-making. They were so heavily drunk that they were quite oblivious of the possibility of an attack by the valiant Sikhs who could not be slow to take advantage of the enemy's weak position. Under Prince Ajit Singh, the Sikhs fell upon them in surprise attacks causing consternation among the revelers. The army fled in different directions leaving behind all the booty they had plundered earlier from Anandpur. The emperor was unhappy over the Panjab affairs but he was helpless as his time was taken up by the Deccan adventure.

The Hill Rajas again met in a council and decided

to send Ajmer chand to speak personally to the emperor about the state of affairs in the Panjab. The emperor realised the gravity of the situation and sent urgent orders to Zabardast Khan and Wazir Khan, the Viceroy of Lahore and Sirhind, to proceed against the Guru without loss of time. They were joined in large numbers by the armies of the Hill Rajas. Fierce fighting on an unprecedented scale ensued. The Sikhs, in deep exultation, sang the following song of their Guru, which now forms the epilogue of Chandi-charittar. The song has already appeared in the Chapter II and may not be repeated here. We may give only its first line to indicate what it is :

‘ਦੇ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਟਰਉ’ ।

‘O Lord, give me Thy Blessings that I may not be deterred from doing meritorious deeds’.

The invaders decided to blockade the city and the siege went on for many months. The ill-effects of the blockade could not but be felt in the long run. Although the Sikhs frequently fell upon the besiegers in surprise attacks and secured food provisions from them, yet this state of affairs also could not go on for all time. Also the attackers had staked the honour of Islam besides being terribly afraid of the emperor, in the event of a defeat, and so tried all means, fair or foul, to win. The scaling of walls and breaking open the gates to enter the city were tried, but nothing availed them against the determined resistance of the brave fighters inside. The Rajas suggested the employment of another strategy. This time, a Brahmin and a Saiyyad were sent to assure the Guru that if he vacated the city, he would not be molested. They swore on the Quran, the cow and the Saligram that no deception was intended.

Many Sikhs were already keen on a settlement and now there seemed before them a reasonable proposal too. The food supplies were failing and rations had been reduced. They were really beaten by thirst and hunger. They had carried on so far by converting barks of trees into bread. Sometimes leaves, fruits and flowers were employed for food and the spirit was kept up, in spite of so much hardship. But how long, after all, could this go on. They requested the mother to intercede for a settlement but the Guru was clear and emphatic. He said, no reliance could be placed on the oaths of men who were at heart irreligious. Yet, he thought he should carry his people with him by exposing to them the insincerity of the enemy in spite of the vows, and this he did in a novel manner. Old shoes broken utensils and other useless things were loaded in sacks to be carried by bullocks. As these were to start at midnight, torches were attached to the bullocks' horns to make everything visible to the enemy. The invaders fell upon the sacks in the hope of plundering huge fortunes. And all this perfidy was resorted to in spite of the vows and assurances. The treachery concealed behind the vows was thus thoroughly exposed to ridicule.

After this, an autograph letter on behalf of the emperor was sent to the Guru. It swore on the Quran guaranteeing a safe passage if the city was quitted. It said that the attackers of the earlier incident were outsiders and they had been suitably punished for breach of faith. The Guru again told his men that he did not accept any assurance from those who had been tried so many times. The fact of perjury, as we shall see later on, was specifically brought to the notice of the emperor in a letter (Zafarnama), he subsequently wrote

to him. He had pointed out in that letter that it was disgraceful for the head of a state to practise deceit for political gains.

The Guru told his people that they should carry on for some time more and they would surely beat the invaders. But most of the Sikhs were now definitely for some sort of settlement. In fact, they had lost their tenacity due to hunger, fatigue and hardships. In this situation, the Guru was compelled to declare that he was willing to allow such of them to go as were ready to disown him by putting their signatures on a 'bedawa' (disclaimer) to signify that they had broken with him. Many Sikhs agreed to affix their signatures, of course, in utter desperation, but some others remained steadfast to the end. Yet they too were impatient for a settlement, for, hunger and fatigue had become intolerable. Also they had passed many a sleepless nights and this had weakened the will to fight. The allied army strengthened their hands by swearing to them solemnly a safe passage. The Guru's own mother had also decided to quit, and though he was unhappy at that decision, he could not allow her to go alone. So he also decided to depart during the darkness of night. But no sooner did the besieged party leave than it was attacked and pursued, in spite of vows and oaths. The Sikhs defended themselves well, but were overpowered. Some were killed, many captured and many more ran in confusion, in different directions. The Guru and his family, followed by some of his trusted Sikhs, proceeded towards Chamkaur, but were hotly pursued. He, however, succeeded in crossing the Sirsa river with his two eldest sons and forty other Sikhs. The Guru's mother escaped with the two youngest Princes and found shelter in a cave

accompanied by an attendant. After crossing a jungle she met an old Brahmin, Ganga Ram, in whom, she thought, she could repose her trust. The Brahmin had been in her service and belonged to Kheri village where, he assured her, he would surely find a safe place for them to stay as long as they desired. The two wives, Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Kaur, reached Delhi after good many hardships and stayed there with Jawahar Singh, a devoted Sikh. The Guru and his party proceeded towards Ropar via Nirmoh. They were attacked by the Pathans, but they were able to reach Chamkaur without much difficulty. Most of the literary works which the Guru and his poets had worked hard to create, went into the depths of Sirsa and got lost for ever.

CHAPTER XIII

The Khalsa wins in defeats and sufferings.

‘ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ
ਆਉ’ ॥ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

‘If thou art keen to play the game of love, come to my path with thy head on thy palm.’

Shalok of Guru Nanak.

On reaching Chamkaur, the Guru went straight to the house of a Jat Sikh. But the man refused him shelter for fear of the imperial forces which, he knew, were in hot pursuit of him. The house was mud-built and lay on an eminence. Also it was so shaped that it could very well serve as a fortress for a time. Now since there was no time to be lost, there was no choice too but to occupy the house immediately and prepare against what was coming. The news had also reached that a large contingent was coming to reinforce the imperial army already in action. In this critical situation the Jat was held and his house occupied forcibly. Soon after, Chamkaur was surrounded on all sides by the imperial forces. The Guru had with him only forty

Sikhs at the time besides his two eldest sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh. It was night so that under its cover the Sikhs could conveniently post themselves at the gates, the walls, the top storey and other strategic places to meet the enemy's onslaughts. At day-break, the imperial force went into action. But it found stiff resistance. Every Sikh on post of duty fought heroically and played his part admirably well. Ajit Singh implored his father to let him go to check the advance of the enemy. His request, of course, was readily granted. He went into action straight away and died fighting. His younger brother, Jujhar Singh made the same request which was also granted and he too met the same fate. The Guru was watching them both laying down their lives with courage and fortitude. It gave him immense satisfaction that his sons were setting for others examples of selfless sacrifice and unsurpassed heroism. It is said, the younger son was sent beautifully dressed like a bridegroom to wed death that was waiting for him, next door. This young man of just fourteen years while proceeding to meet his death felt thirsty and desired a cup of water. The father told him that he should go in for the cup of nectar the angels were holding in their hands and waiting for him to take it, beyond the earthly frontiers. The Guru seemed at the time intoxicated in spirit. He thanked God that his sons had proved worthy of themselves. Not that he ever made any distinction between his sons and his Sikhs. All were united for a common cause and therefore for him all worldly distinctions between 'mine' and 'thine' had disappeared. They all belonged to him, yoked to the service of their common master.

The Sikhs now were set thinking over the situation as it obtained then. They knew that all of them would soon perish. They were sure to be either overpowered and captured or killed in action. They requested the Guru to escape so that the work he was doing should live. But the Guru would not agree. At last they faced him with a resolution (gurmatta) which, they claimed, had the sanction of the Khalsa Brotherhood. They reminded him of his own teachings that the Khalsa Panth was the Guru in future and that he was just one of them. The Guru was conquered and decided to escape in the darkness of night with three body guards-Man Singh, Daya Singh and Dharam Singh. The sound of their footsteps was a warning to the guards who promptly sounded horns to signify alarm. It caused confusion on all sides and in this confusion the Guru escaped. though he lost company with his three attendants. At last, he succeeded in reaching the village Kheri. At the Chamkaur fort, one, Sangat Singh, who resembled the Guru in outer appearance, took the Guru's post. This created the impression that the Guru was still inside. All the Sikhs in the fort, including Sangat Singh, died fighting heroically and then it was discovered that the Guru had already escaped. Men were immediately sent in different directions to capture him. On reaching Kheri the Guru met two Gujars Alfu and Gamu, grazing their cattle there. They recognised him and raised an alarm. The Guru tried to silence them by a few gold coins but failing to achieve their goodwill, he put them to the sword on the spot. Long, hard and rough travel, carried on barefooted for many days, had tired him and while his limbs were bleeding, he felt both thirsty and hungry. To provide some physical relief to himself, he

took the juice and leaves of the Akk plant and in consequence lost his consciousness. On regaining consciousness he found himself lying on the grass. Here he composed the following hymn that explains wonderfully that in weal and woe he was the same man and accepted every situation with the same unbending frame of mind :

‘ਮਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਲ ਮੁਰੀਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਕਹਣਾ ॥ ਤੁਧ ਬਿਨ ਰੋਗ
ਰਜਾਈਆਂ ਦੇ ਓਢਨ ਨਾਗ ਨਿਵਾਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਹਣਾ ॥ ਸੂਲ
ਸੁਰਾਹੀ ਖੰਜਰ ਪਿਆਲਾ ਬਿੰਗ ਕਸਾਈਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਹਣਾ ॥ ਯਾਰੜੇ
ਦਾ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਥਰ ਚੰਗਾ ਭਠ ਖੇੜਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਰਹਣਾ’ ॥

‘Carry to the Beloved the message of His humble servant. Soft beds are to him like a disease, if Thou art not with him. Living in halls and mansions is like living among serpents, if Thou art away. Wine cups hurt him like the sword and things of comfort kill, as does the butcher’s knife, if Thou art not with him. In the companionship of the Friend, turf is superior to soft beds, accursed really are the palaces if Thou art away’.

After a few hour’s rest he proceeded towards Malwa and was in a garden in Machhiwara where his three Sikhs were also able to join him, on a clue that a person exactly of the Guru’s description had passed that way. He was awakened by them from his sleep and was told that the Mughals were making searches everywhere to find him out and therefore they should escape. But he was unable to move due to thorns in his feet.

Two Pathans, Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan, were the owners of the garden. They knew the Guru already and were his admirers too. They were dealers in horses and had been coming to him to Anandpur with

horses for his men. They were deeply touched at his present predicament and offered their services to be availed of by him in any way he liked. It was here that Gulaba Masand came to see him on hearing of his arrival there. He took him to his house and locked him in the upper storey room. But he was afraid of the Mughals too and knew they were in hot pursuit of him. And the imperial army actually arrived soon after and surrounded the village.

A Sikh lady had, at the time, made an offering of Khaddar (coarse cloth) spun by herself in loving devotion to her Guru. This was dyed blue and the Guru dressing himself in the coloured garment and throwing back his long tresses disguised himself as the Pir of Uch, signifying any of the two things—the uch (great) Pir that he really was and the Pir of the city Uch which he was not. In this guise, he was carried by Ghani Khan, Nabi Khan, Dharam Singh and Man Singh, all disguised, the chauri being waved over him by Daya Singh. The two Pathans parted company when the party reached Hehar, in Ludhiana district. A Hukamnama in favour of Nabi Khan and Gani Khan was handed over to them as a reward for the services they rendered in the most critical situation. They had risked their lives and their reputation for his sake and the Guru felt indebted to them.

Recent researches have shown that a letter to (Fateh Nama) Aurangzeb which, of course, was his first letter to him was written by the Guru from this place (Machhiwara). It was carried by Bhai Daya Singh with the assistance of Gani Khan, Nabi Khan and a Saiyayd Qazi. The second letter called the Zafarnama, was written later from Dina. We propose to give extracts from both these letters when dealing with the Zafarnama, as the purports

of both are almost similar. There are Sikh Scholars who feel embarrassed at the story that the great Guru had escaped in disguise. One of them thinks that it was Bhai Daya Singh (one of the five Beloved Ones), who did it, & as a messenger of the Guru he had carried the Guru's letters (Fateh Nama & Zafarnama) to the emperor. This kind of thinking, in our humble opinion, ignores the vital fact that the Guru was engaged in a war, which had its own compulsions, that had to be accepted, in rare cases, if the war of liberation was to go on.

When the party reached Alimgir village, Mani Singh's brother came to pay his respects to the Guru. He offered a horse for the next journey. When the village, Jatpura, was reached, they were very well received by a Rajput Jat, Rai Kalha, a Hindu, turned Muslim. It was here that a messenger, Mahi, was despatched to Sirhind to find the whereabouts of the Guru's family and his Sikhs. He brought the news that Ganga Ram Brahmin had played a traitor. The Brahmin had served in the Guru's kitchen for most of his life and it was not unreasonable to trust him. But he was tempted by the money and the jewellery, the mother had in her possession. He had lodged her, along with the Princes, in a room of his house and stealthily removed the money and the jewellery and then told her that she should take care of her things against thieves that had been moving about the whole night. When the mother actually looked into her things she discovered that the theft had already taken place. She suspected Ganga Ram to be guilty, which he could see for himself. As day dawned, he reported to the authorities of the presence of the mother and her children in his house. They were arrested and delivered to Wazir Khan, the Viceroy of Sirhind, who ordered their

confinement in a tower there. The Princes were, then only nine and seven years old. When they were presented to the Viceroy, he offered them to choose between Islam and sword. They shouted 'Wahiguru ji ki Fateh' to imply that they recognised none but God, who was ever victor's and they were devoted to His Faith alone. They were subjected to tortures and then killed or, as so many historians assert, they were first bricked alive and then beheaded.

It was Sher Mohd. Khan the Nawab of Malerkotla, who had vainly tried to intercede on behalf of the children. The Viceroy's minister, a Hindu Khatri, named Suchand, had, however, opined that they were young cobras and should not be allowed to grow up into snakes. True, he did it to please his masters but the world will ever remember him as a man without a heart. He had lived all his life on flattery and his conscience, had completely failed him. The Princes died heroically, as true martyrs for the cause of Dharma. The world was struck with horror at the enormity of the crime and with amazement at the valour of the children. No mere children of that age could have suffered, as they had done. This they had done because they were saturated, through and through, with the spirit of their great father. Todar Mal a faithful Sikh, heard of it and rushed to the place to save them with money, if that could help. But he was too late. He brought back the tragic news to the holy grand mother, for whom it was too terrible a shock at that age, in spite of her well-developed personality, to bear she swooned and died of uncontrolled grief, on the spot.

We propose to give here the account of the tragedy as given by a Muslim historian, Latif, in his 'History of the Panjab' to show how communal and political

bias works in distorting history. He has made a crude attempt to minimise the guilt and the barbarity involved, in it through clever twists in the presentation of this diabolical crime. The account first says that the Quran does not allow the slaughter of women and minors and so the childrens' lives were spared, But then it goes on to say that as the boys were sitting one day in the court, the Governor spok to them kindly thus: Boys, what would you do if we were to give you your liberty?'. The boys replied: 'We would collect our Sikhs, supply them with implements of war, fight with you and put you to death'. The Governor said: 'If you were defeated in the fight what would you do, then'? They replied : 'We will collect our armies again and will either kill you or be killed'. The Governor was enraged at the haughty reply and ordered his Diwan, Kuljas, to remove them from his presence. The boys were, accordingly, put to death by the Diwan.

How unfeeling become the so-called historians, when they have their own axe to grind?

The Guru heard from Mahi this tale of woe with unparalleled composure. As the same was being narrated, he was digging with his knife a shrub. He told the audience that the rulers were cutting the roots of the empire and digging its grave in the same way as he was cutting the roots of the shrub. No rule built on falsehood, persecution and barbarous atrocities could be sustained for long. A regime that permifted the slaughter of helpless and innocent children, was destined to die its own death. If it had lost its soul, it could have no legs to stand upon.

Leaving Rai Kalha, the Guru reached Dina in Malwa and was very well received by Lakhmira. Shamira and Takhat Mal, the three brothers who enjoyed great local influence. The Guru stayed with them. The

Viceroy on coming to know of it charged them of giving shelter to the enemy of the empire and told them that they ran the risk of being punished for that offence. They replied firmly that they were the Guru's disciples and should not be deprived of the right to serve him. The Guru sensing the danger sent word to his Sikhs to join him there and prepare, if necessary, for the struggle that might be coming. The grandsons of Jodh Rai who had helped Guru Hargobind in his battles at Gurusar, also came to meet him. Thus Dina seemed a suitable place for him to stay and preach his mission for as long as circumstances permitted. He started to attend to the spiritual needs of his people through regular morning and evening congregational gatherings. It was here that he wrote the Zafarnama (epistle of victory) to Aurangzeb. He had received a reply from the emperor to his earlier letter, written from Machhiwara; the internal evidence of the epistle itself proves it, beyond any doubt. A Qazi had brought the letter as also a verbal message, urging on the Guru to meet the emperor but the Guru would not trust the emperor. Instead, he invited him through the Zafarnama to come to Kangar and talk things over. The epistle was sent by Daya Singh and Dharm Singh who went, disguised as Muslim pilgrims, to Ahmednagar where the emperor then was. Another letter was handed over to the envoys to be delivered to the Sikhs of Deccan.

The epistle was a long letter in Persian verse, expressing, in a frank and outspoken manner, the facts of the situation, facts which surely should have been brought home to one in whose hands the destiny of the land was placed. It was a master-piece of truth-telling and was intended to rouse the slumbering soul of the man

and was an attempt to serve the cause, for which the Guru stood all his life. It said, in effect, among other things, that he had done nothing to provoke attacks on him and that the emperor and his military officers had forced war on him. During the course of war, the emperor and his representatives, forgetting their position and status, had employed mean tactics to crush him and his people, so much so, that their vows of Quran could not now be relied upon. Although the emperor was the head of the state and should act responsibly, he had proved to be crafty, wicked and deceitful. Here we give some pieces out of it :

1. 'ਨ ਦਾਨਮ ਕਿ ਈ ਮਰਦ ਰੋਬਾਹ ਪੋਚ ॥ ਦਿਗਰ ਹਰਗਿਜੀ ਰਾਹ ਨਿਆਰਦ ਬਹੋਚ' ॥

'I did not know that the man was crooked like a fox, having no scruples at all about right or wrong'.

The emperor was a perjurer and had forgotten his religion to such an extent as to reduce himself into a worshipper of wealth and power.

2. 'ਨ ਦਾਨਮ ਕਿ ਈ ਮਰਦ ਪੈਮਾਂ ਸਿਕੰਨ । ਕਿ ਦੁਲਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਸਤ ਈਮਾਂ ਫਿਗਨ' ॥

'I do not know why this man is so bad a perjurer. He worshippeth wealth so much that he sacrificeth his religion for its sake'.

3. 'ਨ ਈਮਾਂ ਪਰਸਤੀ ਨ ਅਉਜਾਈ ਦੀਂ ॥ ਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸ਼ਿਨਾਸੀ ਨ ਮਹਮਦ ਯਕੀ' ॥

'Thou hast no regard for religion nor art thy actions guided by religion. Thou neither recognisest God nor hast faith in Mohammad'.

The emperor was a perjurer of the worst type and no trust could be placed on him, even if he vowed on Quran, a hundred times. The army of the Guru was weakened because he believed in the emperor's false oaths. He

would never trust him again.

4. 'ਚੁ ਕਸਮੇਂ ਕੁਰਾਂ ਸਦ ਕੁਨਦ ਇਖਤੀਆਰ ॥ ਮਰਾ ਕਤਰਹ ਨਾਯਦ ਅਜੋ ਐਤਬਾਰ' ॥

'If he vowed a hundred times on Quran, I would not trust him at all'.

Yet, in spite of the wicked ways, employed by the emperor, God had protected the oppressed ones and would surely punish the evil doers.

5. 'ਨ ਪੇਚੀਦ ਮੂਏ ਨ ਰੰਜੀਦ ਤਨ ॥ ਕਿ ਬੈਰੁ ਖੁਦ ਆਵੁਰਦ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਨ ਸਿਕਨ' ॥

'We came out so safely under His Protection that not a hair of the head was injured nor the body suffered the least. God was the Destroyer of the enemies'.

How could a deer approach one under the protection of a tiger ?

6. 'ਕਸੇ ਪੁਸ਼ਤ ਉਫਤਦ ਪਸੇ ਸ਼ੇਰਿ ਨਰ ॥ ਨ ਗੀਰਦ ਬੁਜ ਮੇਸ਼ੋ ਆਹੁ ਗੁਜਰ' ॥

'If one were under the protection of a lion, a deer, a sheep or a goat, would not even cross one's path.'

If that were not so, how could only forty men in Chamkaur meet thousands that were sent to smash them even though, resistance could not be put up for long ?

'ਗੁਰਸਨਹ ਚਿ ਕਾਰੇ ਕੁਨਦ ਚਿਹਲ ਨਰ ॥ ਜਿ ਦਹ ਲਕ ਬਰਾਯਦ ਬਰੋ ਬੇਖਬਰ' ॥

'How could forty men with hungry stomachs achieve results when thousands fell upon them, unawares' ?

8. ਹਮਾਖਰ ਚਿ ਮਰਦੀ ਕੁਨਦ ਕਾਰਜਾਰ ॥ ਕਿ ਬਰ ਚਿਹਲ ਤਨ ਆਯਦਸ਼ ਬੇ ਸਮਾਰ' ॥

'How could mere valour achieve results in a battle when a party was faced with endless hordes of men on the other side ?'

The emperor had harmed his countrymen and God would surely smite him. The Lord was the True Emperor and the King of kings on earth and Heavens. What could a tiny man like the emperor do when the True Emperor was a Friend ?

9. 'ਚਿ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਨ ਕੁਨਦ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨਸਤ ਦੋਸਤ ॥ ਕਿ ਬਖਸ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਕਾਰਿ ਬਖਸ਼ਿੰਦਹ ਓਸਤ' ॥

'What could the enemy do when the Friend (God) was Merciful ? The Lord is ever Kind.'

10. 'ਕਿ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਨ ਕਜ਼ਾਂ ਹੀਲਹ ਸਾਜ਼ੀ ਕੁਨਦ ॥ ਅਗਰ ਰਹਨਮਾ ਬਰ ਵੈ ਰਾਜੀ ਸਵਦ' ॥

'What cleverness will avail the enemy when He is pleased and guideth on the Path' ?

11. 'ਖਸਮ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਨੀ ਗਰ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਆਵਰਦ ॥ ਨ ਯਕ ਮੂਏ ਓਰਾ ਆਜ਼ਾਰ ਆਵਰਦ' ॥

'The enemy may practise enmity in a thousand ways but he will fail to injure even a hair of the head (if the Lord is there to protect).'

12 'ਓਹਾ ਗਰੂਰ ਅਸਤ ਬਰ ਮੁਲਕੋ ਮਾਲ ॥ ਵ ਮਾਰਾ ਪਨਾਹਸਤ ਯਜਦਾਂ ਅਕਾਲ' ॥

'If the emperor is proud of his wealth and kingdom, the Guru's Support is the Immortal Lord, Himself'.

Then the epistle goes on to advise the emperor to meet him in Kangar village where his trusted Sikhs resided and he would be given the fullest protection.

13. 'ਕਿ ਤਸਰੀਫ ਦਰ ਕਸਬਹ 'ਕਾਂਗੜ' ਕੁਨਦ ॥ ਵਜ਼ਾ ਪਸ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਬਾਹਮ ਸਵਦ' ॥

'If the emperor were to come to meet him (the Guru) in the village Kangar, they could talk things over'.

14. 'ਨ ਜ਼ਰਹ ਦਰੀਂ ਰਾਹਿ ਖਤਰਹ ਤੁਰਾਂਸਤ ॥ ਹਮਹ ਕੌਮ ਬੈਰਾਤ ਹਕਮੋਂ ਮਰਾਸਤ' ॥

•There was no danger to him on the way here because it was the land of the Bairars who were faithful to the Guru and were entirely under his influence'.

The Qazi whom he had sent with his written and verbal message assured him (the Guru) that the emperor had regard for the Guru and would wish to act on his advice. If that were so, there should be no difficulty in his coming over to this place. Yet, the Guru could not trust himself to him, for, he had lost faith in him.

15. ਹਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਨ ਆਯਮ ਨ ਈਂ ਰਾਹ ਸਵਮ ॥ ਅਗਰ ਸਾਹ ਬਖਾਹਦ
ਨ ਅੰ ਜਾਂ ਰਵਮ' ॥

•I will not come to thee nor can I think on these lines. I will not go where the emperor wants it, because I do not trust him.'

16. ਅਗਰ ਸਦ ਕੁਰਾਂ ਰਾ ਬਖੁਰਦੀ ਕਸਮ ॥ ਮਰਾਂ ਐਤਬਾਰੇ ਨ ਈਂ
ਜਰਹ ਦਮ' ॥

•If thou vowest a hundred times on Quran I do not trust thee (and so I cannot come to thee).'

Yet, if they met, it could be fruitful. He (The Guru) considered himself as the servant of God and so should the emperor consider himself. They both happened to be idol breakers and so had something in common too ideologically.

Thus it was possible for them both to meet and find out a common ground on which to work for the good of the people. The emperor should not be puffed up by his so-called victories. In fact, true victory (moral victory) as against military or political victory, was on the other side. The standards of victory or defeat were different with different people. What mattered it if he had killed his four sons when the coiled snake had still remained. The Guru meant to say that the people

had been awakened against the cruel regime and its end was already in sight. The Khalsa would bring about that end.

17. ਚਿਹਾ ਸੁਦ ਕਿ ਚੂੰ ਬਚਗਾਂ ਕੁਸ਼ਤਾ ਚਾਰ ॥ ਕਿ ਬਾਕੀ ਬਮਾਂਦਸਤ ਪੋਚੀਦਹ ਮਾਰ ॥

‘What if my four sons are killed when the coiled snake still remains’?

18. ‘ਚਿ ਮਰਦੀ ਕਿ ਅਖਗਰ ਖਮੋਸਾਂ ਕੁਨੀ ॥ ਕਿ ਆਤਸ਼ ਦਮਾਂ ਰਾ ਬਦਉਰਾਂ ਕੁਨੀ’ ॥

‘What bravery is it to extinguish sparks of life when it only adds to the burning of the inextinguishable fire?’

The reader would note from some other parts of the epistle that it was not a wholesale condemnation of the emperor. It gave him credit too where credit was due. That showed the greatness of the writer, who could take an unbiased view even when the opponent had wronged him so grievously. Here are a few extracts about it :

19. ‘ਸ਼ਹਨਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਉਰੰਗਜੇਬ ਆਲਮੀ ॥ ਕਿ ਦਾਰਾਇ ਦੌਰ ਅਸਤ ਦੂਰ ਅਸਤ ਦੀ’ ॥

‘Aurangzeb can give lustre to the worldly throne. He is the king of the times, though religion is farthest away from him’.

20. ‘ਖੁਸ਼ਾ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਸ਼ਾਹਨ ਔਰੰਗਜੇਬ ॥ ਕਿ ਚਾਲਾਕ ਦਸਤਸਤ ਚਾਬਕ ਰਕੇਬ’ ॥

‘Aurangzeb is fortunate, he is the king of kings. He is adept in riding and clever in fighting’.

21. ਕਿ ਹੁਸਨਲ ਜਮਾਲ ਅਸਤੁ ਰੋਸ਼ਨ ਜਮੀਰ ॥ ਖੁਦਾਵੰਦ ਮੁਲਕ ਅਸਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਮੀਰ’ ।

‘He is handsome, and possesses acute understanding. He is the ruler of the land and is the master of so many

well to do people'.

We may now give a few extracts from the earlier letter, which, as we stated, was written from Machhiwara:

22. 'ਹਮਾ ਕੋ ਤੁਰਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਬਿਦਾਦ ॥ ਬਖਸ਼ ਦੌਲਤੇ ਦੀ ਪਨਾਹੀ ਬਿਦਾਦ' ॥

'The same God who gave thee kingdom hath entrusted me the protection of Dharma'.

23. 'ਨਾ ਜੇਬਦ ਤੁਰਾ ਨਾਮ ਔਰੰਗਜ਼ੇਬ ॥ ਕਿ ਔਰੰਗ ਜੇਬਾਂ ਨਿਆਯਾਦ ਫਰੇਬ' ॥

'Thou deservest not the name 'Aurangzeb' (king), for it becometh not kings to practise deceptions.'

24. 'ਜਿਕੋਹੇ ਦਕਨਤਿਸ਼ਨਹ ਕਾਮ ਆਮਦੀ ॥ ਜਿ ਮੈਵਾੜ ਹਮ ਤਲਖ ਕਾਮ ਆਮਦੀ' ॥

'Thou hast returned from the Deccan Hills without success. Thy thirst for conquest in Mewar too hath remained unquenched'.

25. 'ਚੁਨਾਂ ਆਤਿਸ਼ੇ ਜ਼ੋਰਿ ਨਾਅਲਤ ਨਿਹੰਮ ॥ ਜਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਆਬਤ ਨ ਖਰਦਨ ਦਿਹੰਮ' ॥

'Now if thou turnest to the Panjab, thou wilt find fire under thy feet and thou wilt have no rest'.

26. 'ਚਿਹ ਸੁਦ ਗਰ ਸ਼ਿੰਗਾਲੇ ਬਮਕਰੋਰਿਆ ॥ ਹਮੀ ਕਸਤ ਦੋ ਬਚਾਏ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਰਾ' ॥

'What if a fox killed the two offsprings of a lion through deceptions and wiles (Refers to the two elder Princes, martyred at Chamkaur. The letter was written from Machhiwara when the two younger Princes were still alive').

27. 'ਬਸ਼ੋਗੰਦੇ ਤੋ ਇਅਤਬਾਰੇ ਨਮਾਂਦ ॥ ਮਰਾ ਜੁਜ਼ ਬਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਕਾਰੇ ਨਮਾਂਦ' ॥

'I place no trust on thy vows, I have nothing more to do now than to strike thee with the sword'.

28. 'ਅਗਰ ਬਾਜ਼ ਗੁਫਤੋ ਸੁਨੀਦਤ ਬਮਾਸਤ ॥ ਨੁਮਾਇਸ਼ ਤੁਰਾ ਜਾਦਹ ਦੇ ਪਾਕੋ ਰਾਸਤ' ॥

‘If ever I had an occasion to talk to thee I will show thee the true Path’.

29. ‘ਬਮੈਦਾਂ ਦੋ ਲਸ਼ਕਰ ਸਫ ਆਰਾ ਸਵੰਦ ॥ ਜੂਦੀ ਬਹਮ ਆਸ਼ਕਾਰਾ ਸਵੰਦ’ ॥

‘Let the two armies stand apart facing each other.’

30. ‘ਮਿਆਨੇ ਦੋ ਮਾਨਦ ਵ ਫਰਸੰਗ ਰਾ’ ॥

‘And let there be a distance of 3 miles between them’.

31. ‘ਅਜਾਂ ਪਸ ਦਰਾਂ ਅਰਸਾਏ ਕਾਰ ਜ਼ਾਰ ॥ ਮਨ ਆਇਮ ਜੁਤੀਦਹ ਤੂੰ ਬਾ ਦੋ ਸਵਾਰ ॥’

‘After that I will come into the field of battle alone and thou wilt come with two others’.

The Guru is pointing out that the armies should disengage and remain 3 miles apart. Then he makes the sporting offer : ‘I shall come alone and you come with two others to settle the issue of war between ourselves’.

32. ‘ਤੂੰ ਅਜ ਨਾਜੋ ਨਿਅਮਤ ਸਮਰ ਖੁਰਦਹਈ ॥ ਜਿ ਜੰਗੀ ਜਵਾਨਾ ਨ ਬਰਖਰਦਹਈ’ ॥

‘Thou art brought up in luxuries and hast never faced a warrior in the battlefield thyself (and know not what suffering in war is)’.

33. ਬਮੈਦਾਂ ਬਿਆ ਖੁਦ ਬਤੇਗੋ ਤਬਰ ॥ ਮਕੁਨ ਖਲਕ ਖਾਲਕ ਜੇਰੋ ਜ਼ਬਰ’ ॥

‘Come in the field thyself, laced with the sword and other armaments (and settle the issue in a combat). Why should God’s creation be destroyed (simply to serve thy ends)’ ?

The Guru now decided to leave Dina, as reports were current that the Viceroy of Sirhind was preparing to march on him and the Guru preferred to give him battle at a more suitable place. He moved on to Dhilwan where Sodhi Kaul, a descendant of Prithi Chand, paid him a visit. The Sodhi presented him a suit of white clothes and requested him to put off the blue ones which he had been wearing since the time he left

Machhiwara. The Guru tore off the blue clothes into small bits and set them on fire to signify that the Mughal rule symbolised by the blue clothes was coming to an end. Sodhi Kaul got his grandson, Abbai Chand, a highly greedy person, turned a Sikh. He knew that Prithi Chand's descendants had lost all influence with the Sikhs and this was just an attempt to regain that influence.

A Jat, Kapura, paid a visit to the Guru when he reached Jaito. He owned scores of villages including Kot Kapura, a well fortified village. The Guru inquired of him if he would lend its use to him for battles against the imperial army that might soon be coming on him. But he did not have the guts to agree to this risky proposal. He was later hanged by the orders of one, Isa Khan, with whom he had long standing disputes.

The Guru proceeded towards Khidrana where he intended to give battle to Wazir Khan who was now definitely coming with a large army. But he found that the tank of khidrana had run dry. Therefore he had to proceed towards the forests close by.

The Sikhs of Majha who had come back home after deserting the Guru at Anandpur were put to shame by their wives for their cowardly desertions and for being instrumental in adding to the Guru's troubles. They taunted them for an un-Sikhlike conduct and advised them to stay at home in female clothes while they would go to fight for the Guru. They made them realise that their conduct had been most unworthy. Under the guidance of a brave woman, Mai Bhago, they decided to make amends and seek forgiveness. She also accompanied them in male attire. On reaching Khidrana, they entrenched themselves round a pool and waited for the enemy, who, they knew, was advancing towards the place to meet the Guru supposed to be stationed there. They were now determined to secure the Guru's forgiveness. In Khidrana, they met the enemy, fought him bravely,

checked his advance and perished in the attempt

It was the hot period of the year. Clouds of sands were rising due to the blowing of strong gales which made military operations most difficult. The army had therefore to retreat for a more favourable time. After its retreat was completed, the Guru visited the scene of the battle and found his forty brave Sikhs lying in heaps with many Muslims by their sides. He went, in turns, to each one of the Sikhs and blessed him. During the process of inspection he found life in one of them. It was recognised as Mahan Singh whom he lifted into his lap and asked him if he had any wish in his mind for fulfilment. The dying man replied that the only wish he had was that the disowning document on which some Sikhs at Anandpur had put their signatures were torn off so that the broken ties were reunited. Saying this, he closed his eyes in visibly deep pain. The Guru knew the pain and relieved him of it by telling him that the paper stood torn. The martyr died instantly. Mai Bhago also showed signs of life and was blessed for her courage and bravery. The bodies of the martyrs were collected and cremated in Khidrana which was, then, renamed as Muktsar (the Tank of Salvation) to commemorate the great martyrs.

The Guru proceeded from there to what is known as Lakhi Jungle. Sikhs from far and near rushed to this place for his darshan and a consequential rejuvenation in spirit. It was here that at a time when Muslim fanaticism was at its highest peak, Syed Wahmi (Ibrahim, according to some writers), a muslim faqir, accepted Sikhism through a regular baptismal ceremony. He was renamed Ajmer Singh. He accompanied the Guru on his travels further, such was his devotion

The Guru reached Talwandi Sabo, now called Damdama Sahib. Rai Dalla, an admirer of the Guru and a very influential landlord in Malwa came to see him and as an earnest of his devotion he placed himself

and all his resources at the Guru's disposal. It was a pleasure to him if he could be of some use to the Guru. He expressed his grief at the loss of the Princes and at the hardships the Guru had suffered. In this connection, he asked why he did not think of him (Dalla) during the hard days. He said, his men could have been of immense service to him in his difficulties. Dalla had said all this quite in good faith but he had no idea that true bravery was always backed by spiritual strength and faith in a righteous cause. True, his men were quite sturdy and brave but that was so only in the physical sense. They lacked the thing that sustained in hard and long struggle—spiritual power.

An opportunity shortly arose to test his men's spirit. Some Sikhs of Lahore came to pay their homage and brought with them a musket as an offering. The Guru asked Dalla to give two of his men for targets in the trial he was to make of the strength and workmanship of the musket. But Dalla was confused and so were his men at the strange demand that life was to be given away purposelessly and for no better cause than to satisfy the whims of a certain spiritual leader. They had no deep-rooted faith in him, in the sense that he was the symbol of the liberation movement which required sacrifices at the behests of the leader and implicit obedience to his commands. The Guru then called for the head of a Sikh within the hearing of two of his Sikhs. Both of them rushed to him without even completing the binding of their turbans, each claiming that he had the prior right to be shot at, as he had heard the call first. The Guru told them to stand in a line to enable him to test if a single bullet from the musket could pass through both of them. Now, each of them was keen to secure the first position in the reception of the bullet and stood undaunted with his head up. Dalla and his men were dumb-

founded. But the Guru's intention simply was to demonstrate to Dalla the faith and the spirit that guided his Sikhs. So, the bullet was fired to pass above the heads of both. What a wonderful example of self-surrender was presented to Dalla and his men !

Yet, the modern man looks askance at this kind of self-surrender. He thinks, it is a kind of intellectual slavery that kills initiative, self-respect and independence and stultifies one's innate nature. This view is, of course, quite commendable. But it ignores a vital and highly essential factor for progress in the realm of the spirit. In that realm, one has to learn to attune to the Will of God i.e. to come into harmony with that Will. This does not mean merely that the Will of God is to be accepted in a spirit of calm resignation in the face of situations over which one has no control. The Will has also to be worked out or realised in life. We give two quotations to indicate the distinction :

(i) 'ਹੁਕਮ ਰਜਾਈ ਜੋ ਚਲੈ ਸੋ ਪਵੈ ਖਜਾਨੈ' ॥ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧
'He who attuneth to His Will becometh acceptable to Him'.

Guru Nanak in Asa.

(ii) 'ਹੁਕਮੈ ਬੁਝੈ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖ' ॥ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫
The realisation of the Will is the condition for permanent happiness'.

Guru Arjan in Gauri

And how to realise the Will in life ? The answer is very simple and straight-forward. The Will is inscribed in the soul of every man and so it can always be known through the soul itself. The realisation of His Will and His Purposes are thus within the reach of the soul:

'ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ' ॥ ਜਪੁਜੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ
'Nanak, the way to live in harmony with the Divine Will, is inscribed within the soul'.

Guru Nanak in Japji.

The obstacle in the way of realisation, however, is the ego or selfhood that dims the Divine Light. But this Light can be rekindled and harmony restored. Thus, in the attainment of a real spiritual life, the effacement of self, assumes the greatest significance. It was for this reason that the Sikh Gurus had made the acceptance of the Guru's will as the Supreme test of fitness for the exalted office of Guruship itself. It showed the quality of the mind that had learnt to obey the Master's call through the surrender of the self to him. Surrender of the Sikhs to the Guru was, therefore, conceived as a necessary training, of course, on a comparatively small scale, for ultimately coming in tune with the Supreme Will. The Guru and God had become interchangeable terms with the Sikhs because the Guru could be only He who had realised God and had become one with Him. We may elucidate :

One, Qazi Salar Din, once, spoke to the Guru about the identity of the Sikh and the Muslim belief in Destiny. And then he asked, how it was that the Guru was blessing people having bad record. Was it so simply on account of their fidelity, complete surrender and the services rendered to him by them ? The Guru gave a very significant reply. He said, Destiny should be considered as the the reversed letters on a seal. Those who surrendered to the Guru, read them as they really were. The Guru meant to say that surrender to the Guru gave power in the hands of the individual to influence his Destiny and his evolution and to divert the course his life had taken, on account of the past Karma. The best way to destroy the Karma was to enter the region where the Divine nature of the soul nullified the so-called Destiny. The Karma law functioned in the lower plane of ego only and was unable to affect the life of a man who had found his rest in the Divine Centre. So, when

the Sikhs learnt to live in God and the Guru and surrendered their own will, they were working for spiritual upliftment. When they left the results of their actions in the hands of the Guru, they were God-centred and then no ego-istic motives were left to pull them down and thus they could rise above the Maya, the law of Karma and the chain of transmigration. The soul was freed from the life of sin and passions, of pleasure and pain, of virtue and vice, as all these had their origin in ego.

We will give here two more Sakhis to enable the reader to appreciate the significance of surrender to the Guru which the Khalsa was enjoined to imbibe, in the spirit of true service.

1. A Sikh named Jagga Singh had engaged himself in a completely disinterested service and won thereby the Guru's admiration. Some Sikhs became envious and remarked that such service as he was doing, though all right for the time being, was short-lived in the ultimate-sense. They once attacked him too, out of jealousy. The Guru came to know of it and sent for Jagga Singh to inquire why he did not report against the actions of his maligners. He replied that he had nothing to report. For him, the Guru was the only person in his mind and so other things did not interest him. The Guru was highly pleased. He wanted to avail of this opportunity to sink certain lessons into his people. He sent for water and put into it both sugar and stone to explain that disinterested service caused the servant to be blended with God and the Guru in the same way as sugar had dissolved completely in water and that service rendered for self-aggrandisement left the servant untouched like the stone that had remained untouched by water. This was because the servant did not surrender in spirit which required self-effacement in the service of the Guru's causes.

2. A Sikh named Kahan Singh, while plastering a wall, dropped some mud on the Guru, inadvertently. Some over-zealous Sikhs, posing as true servants of the Guru, resented it keenly. The Guru said, Kahan Singh should be given a small stroke for carelessness, because a man engaged in service ought to be alert and careful about his work. Some Sikhs were too ready for that kind of service and started beating the delinquent severely ! But the Guru was displeased and wanted some amends to be made to the Sikh for the illtreatment meted out to him. He asked if any of the beaters would give his daughter in marriage to Kahan Singh. Not one of them came forward in pursuance of the Guru's call. The Guru explained that Sikhs like them obeyed his orders only in name and not in spirit. They followed the path of least resistance while religion was a thing to be lived and entailed hardships also. At this, Ajab Singh, a Sikh from Qandhar, offered for marriage his daughter who happened to be there with her father. Ajab Singh had such faith in the wisdom of the Guru that he was keen on the fulfilment of his wishes, then and there. The plasterer seemed to hesitate but as the girl also joined insisting that the Guru's wishes ought to be respected, he too agreed and the marriage was solemnised.

But with all that has been said above regarding surrender, the Guru had taken care that his Sikhs did not carry the spirit of surrender to absurd lengths. Also he had his eyes on the future when the Sikhs would attain maturity and the Guru in the physical form would disappear. He wanted them to learn to exercise their independence, which he regarded as a sign of life and growth. We have before us the Guru's visit to a place called Narainpur after he had left Damdama Sahib. A shrine of a faqir Dadu had been built in that place by the followers of the faqir to

commemorate him. An anecdote is told of the Guru having saluted the shrine by lifting his arrow in the form of a salutation. He had done the salutation only to test if his Sikhs had imbibed fully his teachings or were mere blind followers. The Sikhs censured him by quoting his own teachings in respect of the worship of tombs or cemeteries. They said, he had violated his own instructions, contained in the line :

‘ਗੌਰ ਮੜੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ ਨਾ ਮਾਨੈ’ ॥

‘The cemeteries and cremation grounds were not to be worshipped even by mistake’.

The Guru admitted that he had rendered himself liable to punishment, even though he had done it merely to test the steadfastness and devotion of the Sikhs to the Word as distinct from the physical person of the Guru. His mind was then actually working in the direction of formally installing the Word as the Eternal Guru of the Khalsa. The institution of Guruship in the human or personal form was not to be maintained for ever. Thenceforth it was to become impersonal in character in the same way as God was—above name, form, time and space and without any human attributes or human limitations. The actual installation of the Word, as the Guru, took place, as we shall see, at the close of his life, but he was preparing his people for the eventuality.

That is how he wanted his Sikhs to retain their independence even though they had been trained to give their complete loyalty to him in the spiritual realm, as explained above. He had bowed before his Pyaras and had, in a way, become equal to them. The Sikhs, thenceforward, were to learn to maintain their independence and initiative, even though they would submit to discipline. They continued to worship the Guru and obey his orders but they questioned fearlessly

when he seemed to go wrong. Thus a harmonious blending of the two ideas was reached in the Guru's life time. Now to come back

Wazir Khan was very much upset at the continued shelter. Dalla was giving to a rebel. He sent him a strong note that he should desist from rendering any help to the Guru, otherwise he would come to harm. But Dalla was no longer mere Dalla. He had taken Amrit and become Dalla Singh. He told the Viceroy that he could not give up his Guru, whatever the cost

It was during these days that Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Kaur who had, during the Sirsa crisis, escaped to Delhi, came to join the Guru. When they learnt that their four sons as also Mata Gujri had died in most heart-rending circumstances, they swooned. The Guru spoke to them feelingly at the tragic end of their sons but consoled them for the heroic death they had met in a great cause. He said, they were dead only in the physical sense. The material world was shortlived and therefore it was not right to bewail over anything that did not endure. They who died for God lived for ever and therefore the mothers should not look at their death in a narrow way. The whole Khalsa should be as dear to them as the children that had parted. They had, now, in their lap, not four but many thousands. The cause for which they had died, lived and so they also lived and the Khalsa would carry on the struggle on their behalf. Where, then, was the need for wailing?

The epistle sent to Aurangzeb from Dina was duly delivered to him by Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Dharm Singh. Initially there were difficulties in having access in him and this fact was communicated by them to the Guru who, according to Saina Pat, wrote back urging on them to carry on their efforts with the help of the local Sikhs, and God would

bless their efforts. But before the Guru's message reached them they were able to deliver the letter. It had touched the man's heart and made a deep impression on his mind. It reminded him of the wrongs he had been doing in his life time. It depicted him to himself in the truest colours and in the most outspoken manner. The fearlessness displayed by Daya Singh in delivering the letter had further deepened the impression that the Guru and his men were made of sterner yet purer stuff and were beyond his powers to subdue. Daya Singh had simply shouted 'Wahiguru ji ki Fateh' (Victory to the Lord), without any more word of salutation, nor did he bend his head to show any special regard for the emperor. The truths contained in the letter seemed to have gone home and he felt remorse. He was beaten, out of a sense of shame. There was another factor also that had played a part in softening and chastening him. He felt that his end was drawing close and he must quit, whether he liked it or not. Be that as it may, the fact remains that he was repentant for what he had been doing all his life. The letters he wrote to his sons, before the close of his life, confirm it. Mohd. Latif, a Muslim historian, refers to these letters, thus : 'The letters he (Aurangzeb) dictated to his sons before his death are sufficiently indicative of the intense remorse he felt for the past'. Thus, he confessed his own failure, but who had brought that awakening in him? Partly it was the Khalsa who fought out for Dharma and recognised nothing but victory as the end of all endeavours, however long and hard the struggle might be. We have, for the other part, a story of a Sikh asking the Guru, once, as to what would become of the Mughals. He replied that a corrupt regime was bound to die its own death :—

‘ਪਾਪੀ ਕੇ ਮਾਰਨੇ ਕੋ ਪਾਪ ਬਹੁ ਬਲੀ ਹੈ, ॥

‘The sin is itself the most powerful weapon to destroy the sinner’.

The Guru had, in a way, prophesied that its end was near and the Khalsa would be instrumental in bringing it about. Yes, the prophesy did come true and the much dreaded power of the Mughal was smashed. But behind it lay conspicuously the terrible sufferings and hardships undergone by the Guru and his valiant Sikhs, for the cause of Dharma. The Guru's own sacrifices were heart-breaking and could not be mentioned without a tear in the eye. He had left his home to the enemy. His mother, his wives and his two younger sons had also dispersed to save their lives and he did not know their whereabouts for a long time. Most of his brave Sikhs were killed in Anandpur and the rest along with his two elder sons fell, one after the other, in Chamkaur, before his eyes. He heard of the tragic end of his mother and the two younger sons, of seven and nine years at a time when he himself was being pursued by hosts of the imperial forces. Yet, like a true faqir, he faced all this with extreme calm. In fact he carried on at Damdama his work of reconstruction in the usual way, as if nothing had happened. These were the sacrifices that had awakened even the dead soul of the man who was accustomed to look at religion in the customary superficial manner. He was really defeated and he confessed it, as noted above. Guru Arjan's warning may be noted :

‘ਨਿਰਵੈਰੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਵੈਰ ਰਚਾਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਦਰਗਹ ਉਹੁ ਹਾਰੈ’ ॥

ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

‘Whosoever practiseth enmity with one free from enmity loseth at the Lord's Court’.

Guru Arjan in Sarang.

Yes, the epistle had served its purpose quite well. It was reported that the emperor wrote to Wazir

Khan of Sirhind, disapproving of some of the excesses he had committed in dealing with the Sikhs. The Viceroys were ordered not to molest the Guru and his Sikhs any longer and, on that account, the Panjab situation had eased somewhat. The emperor blamed his commanders for the treacherous attacks in spite of the vows and was now willing to meet the Guru for settling matters. The bearers of the epistle were furnished a parvana (passport of safe conduct) for their return journey.



CHAPTER XIV

The Guru's departure to Deccan.

‘ਸਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਭਈ ਹਰੀਆਵਲੀ ਜਿਥੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਬੈਠਾ ਆਇ’ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥

‘The place where my true Guru cometh to stay, becometh green’.

Guru Ram Dass in Gauri.

The Guru had left Damdama after a stay of nine months there and was now in Rajputana. He had visited places like Narainpur as referred to in the previous chapter. The two envoys, Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Dharm Singh, on their return, met him at Kulait and related to him their interview with the emperor and the impression they formed of it. They also told him that his personal letter to the Sikhs of Deccan was delivered to them and they were deeply sore over the long tale of the Panjab woes, related to them. The envoys brought the news that the emperor was not keeping good health and that, some days after the interview, they had heard that he was seized with colic pains. The Guru's own reaction on hearing the whole story was that he openly declared his intention to proceed to Deccan. According to several writers, he had decided on the Deccan visit long ago and had left Damdama with that aim. And as a first step in that direction he had sent his wives too to Delhi. We are inclined to agree with this view. It shows clearly that there was something else too in his

mind in connection with the Deccan visit. Be that as it may, the fact remains that he was now proceeding to Deccan to meet the emperor and talk things over. He never entertained in his great heart any personal animosity and if he could so influence the emperor as to make him think in terms of service to the people, it would be an achievement. It through talk and negotiations, the objective could be accomplished, the effort was worth making. In that case there would be no need to carry on the violent resistance which, as it should be clear by now, he always regarded as a painful necessity. We know from Bachittar Natak how his mind always worked in respect of the Muslim rulers. His quarrel with them arose not because they were Muslims but because they were not true Muslims and were oppressive tyrants, while he himself was an uncompromising and permanent enemy of oppression and tyranny. We have seen in chapter VI that when Aurangzeb had sent his son to bring the Guru to his knees, hostilities were brought to a close, through the intervention of Bhai Nand Lal. The latter had then worked upon some sort of understanding between the Guru and the prince. The Guru had, on that account, felt, thus :

‘ਬਾਬੇ ਕੇ ਬਾਬਰ ਕੇ ਦੋਊ ॥ ਆਪ ਕਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਸੋਊ ॥ ਦੀਨ ਸ਼ਾਹ
ਇਕ ਕੋ ਪਹਚਾਨੋ ॥ ਦੁਨੀ ਪਤੀ ਉਨ ਕੋ ਅਨਮਾਨੋ’ ॥

ਬਚਿੱਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Let there be an agreement that both Baba Nanak’s successors and Babar’s successors are the dispensation of God. Let, then, the former be recognised as the spiritual kings and the latter as the temporal kings’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Bachittar Natak.

It implied that if the rulers in their own sphere were just and impartial and worked for the good of the people and religion in its own place flourished unhampered, it was an acceptable arrangement to the Guru. Resort to arms,

would, in that case, be automatically ruled out.

That is the background of how his mind worked in relation to the rulers. So was his mind working even in the present context. Yet he could not depend entirely on talks. What, if the talks failed to produce the desired result? He looked at the future in spacious terms. Panjab had been the centre of his work and activities for decades. It had suffered heavily from the ravages and devastations of war. An opportunity for talks with the emperor had raised new hopes but he could not be sure of its outcome. He could not give up his struggle and leave his people in the lurch. But, he thought that if the struggle had to be resumed at all in the near or distant future the brunt should not fall on the Panjab alone, which had already suffered enormously. The liberation movement he had started aimed at destroying the tyrannical rule that had spread its tentacles throughout the land. The outcome of the movement affected the fortunes of all peoples of the land. Therefore it was right that they should be awakened to their responsibilities and should equally share the sufferings and hardships that a long struggle always entailed. The Guru knew that there were in the country brave Rajputs and Marhattas. The latter had already started their struggle in their own way. The Rajputs were brave but were under the rule of princes who considered themselves too weak to rise against the mighty Mughal. The Guru could infuse in them all the necessary spirit for service and sacrifice and lead the struggle on right lines. According to Suraj Parkash, Sambha ji Marhatta, the son of Seva ji, had invited him to Deccan to lead their movement, assuring him of their whole hearted loyalty. He did not have time so far to go out either for preparing his countrymen for this struggle or for preaching his religion as some of his

predecessors had done. His father had gone on a long tour to the East. Earlier, Guru Nanak had travelled throughout India and had gone beyond, to Egypt, Arabia, Ceylon, China, Tibet and Afghanistan. The Guru wished very much to meet all peoples everywhere and to give them the spiritual food so necessary for a struggle, if the same was to be waged again, and without which no struggle was worth waging. But, struggle or no struggle, men's minds had to be lifted from the various shackles that bound them. It was mainly for this purpose that he wanted to go out. He had to rouse the country for a life of the spirit, a life from which struggle against every evil flowed as a matter of course. It was this urge in his mind that made him proceed towards the South.

It is stated in Sakhi Pothi (describing the travels of the Guru and his father in Malwa) that the Guru had once expressed his wish to go to the South to establish a missionary centre there. When a Sikh close by, dissented remarking that the South was a dirty place, the Guru replied : 'Speak thou not in that disparaging way about a place that is so dear to me and where I have a lot of work to do'.

He was constantly thinking of strengthening and reinforcing the struggle that had so far been confined to the Panjab alone. We shall see that the first thing he did on reaching Deccan was to find a commander for the Panjab forces whom he sent to the Panjab without any loss of time, while he himself remained there to carry on his work and to strengthen the Panjab struggle from outside. He chose the South because Rajputs and Marhattas attracted him. They were brave and virile people. A touch of the Guru's personality would have transformed them into dynamites. Not that he would run after this or that person of influ-

ence to win his support as politicians do. He would only give people enlightenment and build their spiritual and moral background. They would, then, of their own free will, swell his ranks and strengthen his cause. It is true, he could perform this miracle everywhere and make heroes of cowards. But the thing was easier of accomplishment in the South than in any other part of India. The rest of the land could wait but not the struggle. That was really the aim before him when he decided to visit the South. His mind had already worked on those lines when the two envoys arrived. Their report had simply confirmed his resolve to go.

On way to Deccan he was, as we have stated earlier, in Rajputana preaching his mission to the sturdy Rajputs. They welcomed him and listened to him most enthusiastically. He was in Bhagaur when the news came that Aurangzeb had died in March 1707 at Ahmednagar. It was now a new situation and the Guru gave it his most earnest thought. His political insight told him that he should wait and watch developments as to who was going to be the next ruler and what would be the future political complexion of the land? Prince Muazzam was the rightful heir and the Guru had good relations too with him. If he gained the throne he should talk to him as he had contemplated talking to Aurangzeb. If Aurangzeb had died the Guru's work had not died with him. And there was no hurry to rush to Deccan nor so easy to do it in the political turmoil that was expected to follow. So he decided to watch things. He spent some time in the land of Kichak, close to Bhagaur, and then came over to Delhi, as confirmed by Saina Pat in Gur-Sobha. And the Guru's judgement proved perfect. The war of succession had already started among the late emperor's sons. Prince Muazzam (Bahadur Shah) was in Jamrud, a few miles from

Peshawar, when his father died. Azam Shah (Tara Azam) who was in Deccan with his father at the time of his death, assumed command of the imperial army and proclaimed himself as the next emperor. Bahadur Shah hurriedly came over to Delhi to claim the throne for himself. He knew the great influence the Guru had in the Panjab. His help, moral or military, could turn the tide in his favour. Diwan Nand Lal, his secretary and the Guru's devotee, advised him to seek the Guru's help. A messenger was immediately sent to the Guru for the purpose. But the Guru had his own views on the subject. For him, it did not matter much who became the emperor if the system of which the emperor was a symbol did not change. He stood for certain principles and could not do anything that was in conflict with those principles. Yet, he thought in terms of influencing Bahadur Shah in the same way as he had envisaged a possible change of heart in the case of the late emperor, Aurangzeb. He wished very much that the new emperor should begin on a clean slate in respect of his dealings with the people and should win their confidence. Forcible conversions, in particular, should be treated as an evil of the worst kind. And as an earnest of good faith, the emperor should agree to deliver to him, Wazir Khan, the worst offender, who had brought the greatest disgrace to the regime by the unprecedented acts of barbarity and the worst kind of crimes. He had gone to the extreme length of killing innocent children—an act of cruelty that had no parallel in human history and had naturally shocked the whole country including liberal minded Muslims.

The Guru was not thinking in terms of revenge. He had never done it all his life. He was too great to think in a narrow personal way. The whole Khalsa was dear to him like his own sons. Yet, he could not ignore the

cruelty involved in the massacre of children simply because they happened to be his sons. He looked at this foul murder in a perfectly impersonal manner and desired that the perpetrators of such dastardly and abominable crimes should get their deserts so as to serve a lesson for other evil doers. These were the things in his mind, conveyed to Bahadur Shah through Bhai Nand Lal and accepted by the former, that influenced the Guru in his decision to help Bahadur Shah in the war of succession. Macauliffe thinks that the Guru simply got a verbal assurance that a certain request he had in his mind would be accepted after the victory was won. He says that the actual conditions for help were left undefined in rather a vague and general form and their acceptance too, was conveyed to the Guru in the same vague form. That may be so, as time was short and decisions had to be taken quickly, but the fact remains that the Guru could come to his help only if the same was consistent with his cherished ideals and principles of life. There were other considerations also, though they could not be altogether decisive, in themselves. Azam did not have any claim to the throne, as he was the younger son. Also Bahadur Shah had already proved, in his dealings with the Sikhs, that he was more amenable to reasonable influences. The Guru had an additional advantage of a devotee in Nand Lal who exercised great influence over Bahadur Shah. For all these different considerations the Guru finally made up his mind to assist Bahadur Shah and the same was conveyed through Nand Lal.

Yet, in coming to that decision he did not lose his sense of proportions or his perspective. He just sent Dharam Singh with some spearmen to render all possible assistance in the battle of Jajau while he himself came over to Delhi. It was more or less a token of his moral

support. Prince Azam was killed and his army fled. Bahadur Shah was proclaimed emperor. He rewarded the Sikh officers, expressed his gratitude to the Guru and requested him to come and stay with him in Agra, which the Guru did. The new emperor made him costly presents and presented a robe of honour. He also offered him a Jagir and a large estate which the Guru did not accept, for wealth or rank had no attractions for him nor could he be pleased merely through material rewards when he had objectives of far greater significance before him, conveyed already through Nand Lal. The emperor listened to him and very sympathetically too. This is clear from a letter written by the Guru from Agra to the Sikhs of the Panjab. He hinted therein that his talks with the emperor were expected to bear fruit and that he would then be able to come back to the Panjab to serve them. Obviously, he was discussing with the emperor the wider question of bringing about peace in the land. But after sometime, it became quite evicent that Bahadur Shah was a weak man and did not have the guts to countenance bolder policies. He was not prepared even to punish Wazir Khan, the worst offender in respect of his dealings with the Sikhs and who was notorious for some of the cruelest deeds done by him. He was afraid of the bigoted Muslims and prevaricated. He said, he should be allowed to establish himself firmly before he could act in the way the Guru desired. The Guru was not satisfied and reproached him for giving false assurances.

Yet, the emperor for his own reasons did not want to alienate him and requested him to accompany him to the land of the Rajputs and then to the South where he had to suppress the rebellion of his brother Kam Bux. The Guru readily agreed as it fitted admirably with his own future programmes. The emperor wanted the Guru's

moral or other support in dealing with the Marhattas as also the Rajputs, who had rebelled in Jaipur, Ajmer and Marwar. He did not have the sense to see that the Guru would never think on those lines. How could he possibly agree in the subduing of the brave Marhattas and the sturdy Rajputs who were fighting his own battles though in their own way? He was whole-heartedly behind them. But they lacked a leader of the Guru's calibre, that could direct the movement on a sound moral basis.

The Guru proceeded with the emperor upto Nander (Abchal Nagar), situated on Godawari and then parted company. In the way, one, Man Singh, a survivor of the battle of Chamkaur was killed by a Muslim fanatic when the former was engaged in a peace mission between two factions of the locality. The emperor delivered the murderer to the Guru for a suitable punishment but the Guru, out of large-heartedness, forgave the man.

The Guru's intimacy with Bahadur Shah had given an opportunity to hostile critics to create a lot of misunderstandings. His departure to Deccan with the emperor has been variously interpreted. Some simply say, he went there to re-organise his work. But some others make highly preposterous assertions, wholly unrelated to facts. They say, he had gone there for a change as he was dejected due to the losses he had suffered. Some others hold that he had lost his reason and balance. There are still others who assert that he had accepted service under the emperor. Muslim writers go to the length of saying that he had agreed to embrace Islam. It is really a tragedy that some people who call themselves historians wish to build history on mere conjectures and even on lies. But this can only reveal either their own prejudices or a colossal ignorance of

the man whom they measure, wittingly or unwittingly, by their own narrow standards. Here is a justification for the remark we had made in the introduction that no one was competent to write the history of a seer unless one was, besides being honest, fully conversant with the seer's philosophy and could relate that philosophy to the seer's life. We have here before us an instance of the most absurd myth viz, the Guru had accepted service, being propagated by some people as a fact of history. It is a damnable lie which did not deserve even a mention as that would impart to it a certain degree of credence. But some gullible people were apt to be taken in and so a passing reference seemed desirable. It is a matter of satisfaction however, that it is not always easy to make people accept a story put up before them to malign a man of the calibre of Guru Gobind Singh. We know several historians, who, though otherwise unsympathetic towards the Guru, have not been able to swallow this fantastic nonsense. Here is the statement of Malcolm on the subject, even though the writer is unable to shake off his antipathy towards the Guru, in other respects :

‘When we consider the enthusiastic ardour of the Guru's mind, his active habits, his valour, his insatiable thirst for revenge which he had cherished against the murderer of his father and the oppressors of his sect, we cannot think when that leading passion of his mind must have been increased by the massacre of his children and the death and mutilation of his most attached followers, that he would have remained inactive, much less that he would have sunk into a servant of that Govt., against which he had been in constant rebellion. Nor is it likely that such a leader as Gobind Singh, could ever have been trusted by a Mohammedan prince’. The writer could well have added that it was not possible for the people

to reconcile the service theory with the fact of the Guru commissioning Banda to the leadership of the Panjab, immediately on reaching Deccan. Another writer, Saina Pat tells us that during the journey to Deccan, the Guru frequently left the emperor and went someway on his own. Even at the start from Agra he lived in a garden several miles away from the emperor. These are indisputable facts, supported by the Mughal records also. The Guru was under no obligation whatsoever to the emperor and was free to act as he chose.

At Nander, the Guru went to see a Bairagi named Lachhman Dass. The Bairagi was the son of a Rajput, Ram Dev, of Bhardwaj clan. At his young age, he was fond of hunting but he was very tender hearted too. Once, he killed a doe and when he cut its body open he found within it two cubs alive that died soon after. He was so deeply touched that he renounced the world and became a Bairagi, renamed as Madho Dass. He learnt occultism from a Yogi, Aughar Nath, but later he set up his own monastery in Nander. People had come to believe that, through the practice of austerities, he had achieved occult and miraculous powers. If, for instance, an intruder ever made the mistake of lying on his coach, it was regarded as an act of sacrilege and the Bairagi would punish the intruder by overthrowing him from the coach. His magic skill seemed to work on people through the power of the mind, practically in the same manner as the hypnosis of the Modern age works. The person under the influence of the hypnotiser thinks, acts and behaves the way the hypnotiser wants it. It is, after all, the mind that controls all parts of the body. The sub-conscious mind is a power house that provides energy for all conscious faculties to operate. Through suitable suggestions, habits can be improved, character moulded and body organs

repaired or healed. Diseased limbs and mental disorders can be set right by letting the patient withdraw his mind, through proper suggestions given to him. The fact is that human pain exists to a great extent in the mind and it can be dissipated also by the power of the mind. The belief in the efficacy of a cure is itself the cure, through psychological processes, of course. The Bairagi's magic art may have some similar psychological significance.

When the Guru was in the hut of the Bairagi, the Bairagi was away. As the Guru was very much fatigued, he rested his limbs on the coach, which, for the Bairagi, was the throne that represented the spiritual authority of his Guru, from whom he had acquired the so-called powers. The Sadhus in the ashram were requested to provide food to the Guru and to his companions. But they refused to do so before the Bairagi had been served first. One of the goats in the hut was shot, cooked and served to the party. This was another sacrilege. When the Bairagi heard the story, he was in rage. He tried his so-called occult powers and his magic on the intruder but it did not work in casting any spell on his powerful mind that remained wholly unmoved. When the Bairagi looked at the intruder's face, the same reflected peace, light and calm. The eyes were shining brightly, casting a sweet and radiant look that seemed to snap the peculiar cast of the Bairagi's heart. He saw clearly that behind the lustre and radiance of the face there rested the peace and glory of the great soul that had already started to affect his own heart. He was overpowered, fell on the Guru's feet and called himself his Banda (slave). In Nander, the Guru found himself in the lap of nature and felt happy and at home. The exquisite beauty of the place and its secluded location had drawn him, because it could make his communion with the Creator easy. So he decided to

make it his headquarters. People from far and wide began to visit Nander, now called Abchnagar partook of his Divine Wisdom, listened to his soul-stirring discourses, got their doubts removed and attained the peace of the soul. Topics of religion and philosophy were discussed with seekers and learned men of all communities, who thronged to him for inspiration and guidance. He endeared himself to all and won their respect and admiration. Nander had really become a place of pilgrimage. Saiyyad Khan, now a devotee, came all the way from the Panjab for the Guru's darshan. Soon after, a message was brought from Nasiran to say that her husband Budhu Shah was declared a rebel and the whole town of Sadhaura was ransacked and that she was also preparing that very day to die, fighting as a true soldier of the Guru.

In this atmosphere, the Bairagi too was a changed man. He was baptised and renamed as Gurbux Singh. He had realised by that time that the life of austerities was of no real value because it did not stir up man for action in the service of the afflicted humanity. When sin and suffering stalked the land, it was a sin to sink into selfish individualism. In the face of so much evil in the world the search for the so-called personal salvation had no meaning. The ethics of indifference to the world now appeared to him as a dangerous concept. How could a man of God, he realised, witness tyranny without revolting against it? The love of God, if true, should be expressed through the service of man. No perfection was possible unless backed by service because the basis of perfection was the love of God which could not but lead to the love of man. True enlightenment and inner purity should provide inspiration to serve humanity. In short, the Bairagi's cult had now changed to what may be called

spiritual humanism.

Banda heard the atrocious tales of the Panjab. He was deeply affected about the cruel killings of the Guru's sons and his Sikhs. The dormant Rajput spirit grew up within him and it wanted an outlet. He realised that he had wasted his life and had now found the way. The Guru also felt that he had, after all, found a man who could be entrusted to carry on the work he had left unfinished in the Panjab.

Banda, one day, got ready to go. The Guru presented him five arrows and commissioned twenty five of his most trusted Sikhs to accompany him for help and guidance so that Banda did not consider himself a dictator, even in affairs not strictly religious. He told him to remain continent. It is difficult to be positive as to the sense in which the word continent was employed here. We have seen in chapter VIII, Bhai Gurdas using the same word for something quite different from what its current usage implied. It is reasonable to suppose that the Guru also did not mean anything different. The special emphasis on continence did not imply that Banda should not marry at all on the grounds that marriage ill-suited the kind of hard life he was to undertake. Further, Banda was told to ever remain wedded to truth and nothing but the truth. He should not only build no power for himself but should consider himself as the servant of the Khalsa. He should never allow victory or power turn his head and must not have any sect of his own. A manifesto addressed to the Sikhs of the Panjab was delivered to him. They were told to rally under Banda to carry on the struggle under his leadership.

And Banda arrived in the Panjab. Large bands of devoted Sikhs joined him in the shortest time and soon swelled into a big army. But gradually he allowed

mercenaries and even robbers and dacoits to be recruited, who joined for the love of plunder and booty. Banda won victories wherever he went. But power corrupted him. He was undoubtedly a brave man capable of making the highest sacrifices. His patriotic sense was unmatched, yet, he departed from some of the injunctions of the Guru. True, he punished the evil doers suitably but he committed excesses for which there was no sanction. Thirst for revenge caught hold of him and he did not realise that it was an ignoble impulse in a man engaged in a holy warfare. Sirhind was razed to the ground. Samana was looted and the male inhabitants were put to the sword. Mustafabad was attacked and plundered. Those who had indulged in the slaughter of cows or had violated the chastity of Hindu women were put to the sword. The village of Damla was plundered, because its Pathan inhabitants had once deserted the Guru. Hundreds of villages met a similar fate. Wazir Khan was captured in a pitched single combat and met an ignominious end. His sons and all his relatives were put to death. In fact, general massacre ensued at some places. Suchanand, the minister of Wazir Khan who had helped in the murder of the princes, was tortured to death. A rope through an iron ring was passed in his nose and he was taken in the bazars to beg alms and was given shoe beating till he died. Banda established his headquarters at Mukhlisgarh. But his power was short-lived. He had overstepped the Guru's instructions in some essential respects. He was enjoined to consider himself as the servant of the khalsa but he did not. He created a sect of his own although, paradoxically, he continued upto the end of his life, to own allegiance to all the ten Gurus. It

seems, he had taken up a responsibility that entailed maturity in spirituality, which he had not fully acquired. The Sikhs broke up into two factions—the Bandai and the Tat khalsas. Baba Binod Singh, one of the twenty five Sikhs whom the Guru had sent with Banda, had led the revolt. But the heroic Banda was already doomed. His own weaknesses brought about his downfall, and he confessed it at the close of his life. According to Mehma Parkash he said: 'No power could have destroyed me. I contravened the orders of the true Guru and this is the punishment for that'. The Sikhs with him were defeated and he was taken prisoner. His execution was a terrible thing, indeed. Perhaps God had willed to deal with him as he had dealt with others and he himself realised the same amply. According to Siyarul Mutaakhrin, Banda, facing the executioner, is reported to have said: 'Whenever corruption in men increases so as to outstep all bounds the Divine Avenger raises a scourge like me to chastise the race so depraved; but afterwards He grants power to men like you to punish him, in return'. He was clothed in mock robes of state with his infant son, Ajit Singh, in an iron cage. The child was butchered before his eyes and he himself was tortured by hot pincers and his dead body was thrown on Jamuna banks. Thus ended a career, turbulent to the extreme, yet possessing qualities of a great leader. For want of a mature spiritual background, his path became coloured and finally darkened.

Muslim writers vied with one another in cursing him for what he did. But they were surprised at the undaunted spirit he and his companions displayed to meet death. This is what Siyarul Mutaakhrin writes, even though the writer is unable to conceal his venom

against him : 'It is singular that these people not only behaved firmly during the execution but they would dispute with each other as to who should suffer first. Banda was produced last of all with his son seated in his lap and he was ordered to cut his throat which he did, without uttering a word. Being then brought nearer the magistrate tribunal, the latter ordered his flesh to be torn off with red hot pincers, and it was in those moments he expired, his black soul taking its flight, by one of those wounds, towards the regions for which it was so well fitted'.



CHAPTER XV

The earthly close

‘ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਭ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਮਨਾਇੰਦਾ ਤਿਸ ਦਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਕਿਉਂ ਹੋਇ’ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥

‘The true Guru wisheth well of everybody. Then, why should anyone wish ill of him (unless there be sordid motives behind)’?

Guru Ram Dass in Gauri

Banda had left for the Panjab as the leader of the movement there and this was the Guru's first achievement in the South. What other plans he had in his mind, has remained a sealed book. The only thing known to the world is that after Banda had gone, the Guru continued to work incessantly for the regeneration of the people. But this too did not go on beyond one or two months. God had willed that this great career should come to a close before the detailed news of Banda's excesses reached him. Perhaps Providence wanted to spare him the agony the news would surely have caused him. Banda did not prove quite worthy of the trust reposed in him and damaged grievously the cause for which the Guru stood all his life. His passion for revenge had

overpowered him and he lost altogether his balance and sense of proportions. The Guru's end came most abruptly and unexpectedly. He was attacked by a Pathan during the evening when, after the prayers were done, his Sikhs had left and he was almost alone, taking his well-earned rest, after the day's usual hard work. He killed the attacker on the spot and the Sikhs, within hearing, got hold of the other conspirators and finished with them. But who was this Pathan and what could be the motives of the conspirators in killing this great saviour of mankind? The cause of the killing has remained clouded in mystery, up to this day. Yet, there is nothing exceptional about it. Many great men have similarly fallen victims of secret assassinations. Powerful influences working behind the crime had covered up the crime. The same thing had happened in this case.

From the diverse and conflicting accounts of the assassination, some of them deliberately thrown out to confuse the motivation, it has become difficult for any one to say for certain as to which of these accounts is most authentic and true in its entirety. Yet, it is possible to arrive at a fairly correct conclusion, if these accounts are examined in perspective, always keeping in mind the Guru's personality, the causes he had espoused and the circumstances in which he was placed at the time. We propose to state here all the prominent accounts to enable the reader to judge for himself as to where truth rests. Here they are :

- (1) According to Trump and several Sikh writers the Guru was stabbed by Gul Khan, the grand-son of Painde Khan, whom Guru Hargobind had slain in a single combat. The intruder was looking for an opportunity to take his revenge for the murder of his grand-father, through killing the grand-son of the slayer.

(2) The account, given in one of the recensions of Bahadur Shah's history, is as follows :

The Guru was used to addressing the daily congregation, attended by Hindus, Muslims and others. An Afghan fanatic who frequently attended these gatherings, was present one day, when certain expressions derogatory to the Prophet escaped from the Guru's lips. The Afghan was enraged and, regardless of consequences, stabbed the Guru twice, with a poniard.

(3) There is an account, the most absurd one, given currency to, mostly by Muslim writers, from whom some other writers seem to have taken their cue. We give below this account—(a), as also two other basically similar accounts—one by Cunningham—(b), and the other by some Sikh writers—(c), to enable the reader to see how false stories are picked up, then modified according to predilections, and, in course of time, accepted as gospel truths :

(a) The Guru had owed money to a Pathan from whom he had purchased horses long long ago. During the Guru's wanderings (stay in Deccan, according to Latif), the Pathan came to demand his debt. But as the Guru was unable to pay at the time, he asked the creditor to come some other time. The Pathan insisted on immediate payment and the Guru, in rage, killed the Pathan on the spot. But he immediately realised that he had done wrong, in a fit of anger. The Pathan had died by that time and the Guru was keen on making amends. So, he brought up the Pathan's son—(sons according to some writers) and gave him his love like a father. The boy-Pathan was given training in the use of arms. When he grew up to maturity the Guru told him that his father had been killed by him. He also encouraged him that he should avenge his father's death. And when he actually did it, the Guru praised him as a worthy son of a worthy father, because he himself had unfortunately not been able to avenge the

death of his own father (Guru Tegh Bahadur). The Pathan was captured but the Guru forgave him.

(b) "The Guru had engaged the services of an Afghan, half adventurer, half merchant, and he had procured from him a considerable number of horses. The merchant or servant, pleaded his own necessities and urged the payment of huge sums due to him. Impatient with delay, he used an angry gesture and his mutterings of violence provoked Gobind to strike him dead. The body of the slain Pathan was removed and buried and his family seemed reconciled to the fate of its head. But his sons nursed their revenge and awaited an opportunity of fulfilling it. They succeeded in stealing upon the Guru's retirement and stabbed him mortally, when asleep or unguarded. Gobind sprang up and the assassins were seized, but a sardonic smile played upon their features and they justified their act of retribution. The Guru heard; he remembered the fate of their father and he perhaps called to mind his own unavenged parent. He said to the youths that they had done well and he directed that they should be released uninjured". Cunningham is not sure of the authenticity of what he had stated himself and adds the following lines in the foot note :

"Many accounts and specially those of Mohammedans, likewise represent Gobind to have become deranged in his mind and a story told by some Sikh writers gives a degree of countenance to such a belief. They say that the heart of the Guru was inclined towards the youths whose father he had slain, that he was wont to play simple games of skill with them and that he took opportunities of inculcating upon them the merit of revenge, as if he was himself weary of life and wished to fall by their hands. 'The Siar ul Mutaakhrin', simply says that Gobind died of grief on account of the loss of his children".

(c) The Sikh writer referred to in (b) above brings us to this (c). Cunningham seems to have in mind Bhai Sukha Singh who, in his Gur-bilas, has stated that the grandsons of Painde Khan had committed the murder and that the Guru had himself invited the attack by telling the boys that he had killed their father and therefore they should avenge the wrong. Sukha Singh has based the above version not on any previously recorded history but on heresay. Kavi Santokh Singh accepted the above version and allowed free reins to his colourful imagination, so as to further elaborate it into something still worse. According to him, the Guru took some opium too as a sedative to help him to take the attack calmly. Needless to say that the above writers contradict themselves by saying further that the Guru killed the Pathan on the spot. Why did he kill him if he had invited the attack himself? This has not been explained.

(4) The view as held by Daulat Rai and given in his book on the life of the Guru, is as under :

The emperor Bahadur Shah, on parting with the Guru, had fully realised that the Guru was his potential enemy. He knew that the Guru had power and backing. He also knew that he possessed military ability and could turn tables on him. So the emperor thought he could not be secure so long as the Guru lived. He commissioned Painde Khan's sons to commit the crime. Thus, it was Bahadur Shah, the emperor who got the Guru murdered, etc. etc.

(5) And lastly, we give the gist of the account of assassination as given by Saina Pat, the Court poet, in his 'Gur-Sobha', supported by Bhagwan Singh in 'Chatrajugi'. Saina Pat, however, is silent about the motive behind the murderous assault. But Bhagwan Singh definitely suggests that the murderer was a Pathan sent by Wazir Khan, the Viceroy of Sirhind, who was afraid of the Guru, for the crime of having murdered his

innocent Princes Wazir Khan knew that for the help rendered to the emperor in the war of succession, the Guru had demanded from him that Wazir Khan should be delivered to him or at least suitably punished. He had also the information that the emperor had friendly feelings towards the Guru and had expressed his disapproval of the murder of innocent children. Wazir Khan was inherently a bad man and capable of any wicked action. It was natural for such a man to think and act in a manner that would eliminate his potential enemy. So he hatched a conspiracy and deputed a Pathan for the purpose. The Pathan, according to Bhagwan Singh, first went to find out from the Guru's wife the exact place where the Guru then was. He came to Nander and was looking for a suitable opportunity for attack. He often visited the Guru's Durbar and in course of time created the impression that he was a seeker and had a liking for the Guru's teachings. In this way, he dispelled all suspicions about himself. It was the evening time, one day, when he found the Guru alone, his Sikhs having retired for the night. The Guru was also taking his rest. The Pathan had two other conspirators with him who were stationed at some suitable place. When all seemed safe, he thrust his dagger into the Guru's stomach and repeated it the second time. The Guru got up dazed but he succeeded in killing the attacker on the spot. The Sikhs within hearing hurried to the place and finished with the other conspirators too. They were deeply shocked and grieved to find their Guru attacked in that cowardly manner. The wounds were dressed, sewn and treated with ointments and in the course of a few days the wounds appeared to have healed. The Sikhs living in far off places heard of the attack. The fear lurking in their minds that the Guru might not survive brought them to Nander to have his darshan. So deep

was his love for his devoted Sikhs that he appeared before them to reassure them that he was getting well. But some days after, it appeared to him that his end was in sight. After midnight, one day, he told his people that he was preparing for his Eternal Home and they should accept His Will. He died in Sambat 1765. Some writers say that the wound was completely healed but was reopened when the Guru tried to bend a hard bow. The Guru bled profusely and died the same day. Saina Pat makes no such mention of the opening of a wound. The story of the opening of the wound was first introduced by Bhai Sukha Singh and then others picked it up.

From the above versions about the murderous assault on the Guru, any intelligent man can see that the assault had a political motivation. The first account is totally far-fetched. The world knows that Guru Hargobind did not have any ill-will towards Painde Khan. In fact, he loved him for being a brave man. It is true, Painde Khan had forsaken him and joined the enemy's camp. Yet, when he was killed, the Guru felt for him deeply. Thousands of men had been killed on both sides during the long drawn-out wars and Painde Khan was just one of them. It is a far fetched idea that the thirst for revenge continued to be nourished for several generations. Some writers claim that the attacker, whoever he was, had stayed with the emperor for many months. This, if true, may have a significance of its own and may point to the real cause of the assault.

The second version cannot be accepted as true, knowing as we do that the Guru had a very broad outlook on religion and could never speak against the founder of any religious community, otherwise he could not have attracted pious and holy men from all communities.

He had so many Muslim devotees prepared to lay down their lives on his call. That would not have been possible if he had ever allowed himself to make any derogatory remarks against their Prophet. Behind this story also there might be working the political hand that wanted to incite orthodox Muslim sentiment and cover up the real culprit.

The third version is altogether absurd and so incredible, that it does not deserve to be examined at all. It is a pure fabrication, again by the same clever hand behind the murder, to sully the Guru's name and reputation and to damage his moral image. The Guru was too great to go into rage over a very small matter and then kill a Pathan for no greater fault than that he demanded his debt. The Guru possessed a very large heart and had, on occasions, forgiven Pathans and others for much greater offences. He did not cherish any revengeful spirit for the murder of his father or, for that matter, of his sons and his Sikhs. Nor would he ever encourage or invite some one to kill him. That would be an act of suicide, whatever the form given to it. The story of a self-invited attack invented by Bhai Sukha Singh, illustrates how misconceived notions sometimes lead to disastrous consequences. For Sukha Singh, the Guru was the incarnation of God and so he would not reconcile himself to the position that his Guru could ever fall a victim to the dagger of an assassin. Kavi Santokh Singh similarly developed a curious idea in his rich and fertile brain. He wished to prove that his Guru was omniscient and, when the Pathan came he knew that his assassin had come, as was the Will of God. The Guru tempted the Pathan to kill him, because he desired to abide by the Immutable Will. Yet, in the same breath, the writer says that the Guru killed the Pathan on the spot. The Guru might well say : 'God, save me from such friends'.

It is not out of place to give here another story, as given by Macauliffe about the debt incurred on the purchase of horses. Of course, it is wholly different from the above story but it will give an indication as to how stories get mixed up and then different versions, in the amended and elaborated forms, suiting particular situations, appear and make confusion worse confounded. Here is the story : A Pathan from whom the Guru is said to have purchased horses long time ago without making him the payment of the price amounting to eleven thousand rupees, came to him for the money. As the Guru did not have funds enough to pay back the debt he told his creditor that thirty years after his death, his Sikhs would come into power and then he would have only to present the Guru's acknowledgement of the debt to Sikh leaders, to receive from them the amount many hundred fold. The Pathan went away satisfied. Subsequently, under happier and more prosperous circumstances, the debt was actually discharged.

So, we are ultimately left with the remaining two versions, which may be considered together. We may state at the outset that Bahadur Shah was not a bad man, intrinsically. Yet, it is an undeniable fact that he was a worldly man and loved his self-interest above everything else. For the sake of the throne, he had fought against his own brother, Azam, and killed him. The same man had, in 1710 A.D., sent orders for a wholesale massacre of Nanak Prastan (worshippers of Nanak), a phrase adopted by him in contempt of the Sikhs and the founder of their Faith. Such a man must regard the Tenth Guru also as his potential enemy and a danger to his throne. He must be inwardly afraid of the fact that the Guru was the spiritual head of a people that were ever ready to make any sacrifice, at his beck and call. He also knew that the Guru was an

able leader in the military sense and had his sympathies with the Rajputs and the Marhattas in the struggle they were waging in the South. Further, the Guru had, throughout his life, remained openly opposed to the Mughal regime and had, on reaching Nander, actually sent Banda to the Panjab to reorganise revolt and to carry on the work he had left unfinished there. Bahadur Shah was shrewd enough to see that the Guru's Deccan visit had a significance of far reaching dimensions. His teachings were bound to awaken and galvanise people to throw off their bondage in all spheres, including the political. Deccan was already seething with discontent and had remained a headache for Aurangzeb, all his life. The Guru's presence there should naturally make Bahadur Shah also extremely nervous. Also the Guru had severely rebuked him for his failure to carry out assurances given before the war of succession and this must have resulted in some mental estrangement between the two. From these considerations, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Guru should appear to him as a real thorn on his sides. Therefore the possibility of Bahadur Shah having plotted for the assassination could not be altogether ruled out. It should be remembered that the Guru was no ordinary person. He was loved and adored by large sections of people, including influential Muslims. Also he was in a place surrounded by his devotees and admirers. How could any one be so devoid of common sense as to take so great a risk to his own life unless he was confident of being backed by some powerful influence? The urge for revenge of some personal wrong cherished for decades would not explain the dare-devilry in the foul murder. There must be at bottom high stakes and great fear that, unless the Guru was removed, something serious would happen. It seems improbable that Wazir Khan alone

could be at the back of a highly risky venture. He was a coward too and must fear disclosure, specially because he knew the visible intimacy the Guru had with the emperor. It is therefore not inconceivable that the emperor might have employed Wazir Khan for this particular purpose and Wazir Khan must naturally have been too ready to serve him in this nefarious conspiracy, as he too regarded the Guru as his greatest enemy. In any case, it seems quite clear that whatever the details of the conspiracy, the murder was political and it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that the Guru fell a victim to the Mughal, whether the plotting was inspired by Wazir Khan or by Bahadur Shah or by both of them combined. The Mughal emperors had, before too, caused the death of two Sikh Gurus—Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur, the two holiest of men India had produced. And this was the third murder on the head of the same ill-fated regime.

Yet, it is the cruelest irony of fate that when the news of the Guru's death reached Bahadur Shah, he is reported to have sent a Matmi Khilat as a robe of honour to the deceased. Earlier, the same man is reported to have sent the Royal surgeons to attend to the wounds inflicted by the Pathan. Did history repeat itself so faithfully? Jahangir had himself ordered the execution of Guru Arjan Dev and subsequently the imprisonment of Guru Hargobind and yet had tried to mitigate the resentment caused by his actions, through handing over to Guru Hargobind, Chandu employed by him in the diabolical act of execution. He had even made friends with that Guru. Similar diplomatic tactics might have been employed by Bahadur Shah as well. Yet, when all is said and done we do not claim the last word on the subject, except that the murder was political.

We may now come back to the last few hours of the Guru's sojourn to this world, reference to which

has already been made in the account of the murder given by poet Saina Pat and need not be repeated. The Guru sent for his Sikhs and formally installed the Word as the Guru to succeed him. Here are his last words :

‘ਆਗਿਆ ਭਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ ਤਬੀ ਚਲਾਇਉ ਪੰਥ ॥ ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੋ
ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਯੋ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ॥ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ ਮਾਨਯੋ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾ ਕੀ
ਦੇਹ ॥ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੋ ਮਿਲਬੋ ਚਹੇ ਖੋਜ ਸਬਦ ਮਹਿ ਲੇਹ’ ॥ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼
‘As ordained by the Immortal Lord I brought about the
Panth Khalsa. Hear Ye, my good Sikhs, accept hence-
forth the Holy Granth as the Guru. It is the visible
embodiment of all the Gurus. Those who wish to meet
the Lord, approach the Word with devotional mind,
to find Him there’.

Panth Parkash.

Thus, he had closed for all time the institution of Personal Guruship. He had decided it already in his own mind, because he knew that the Guru in the human form was not a cheap phenomenon that could be made available at all times. Only a perfect being, as could be conceived in human form, was qualified to be the Guru of mankind and this was naturally rare. Thus human Guruship could not become a permanent principle or doctrine of religion. A thing which was not available at all times could not have a permanency about it either. The only thing permanent was God or His Word, if revealed through a perfected human agency. Thus the only permanent Guru was God or His Word. Conscious of this limitation the Guru had made up his mind long ago to make a change in the concept of Guruship. The experience of the actual working of the institution of Personal Guruship had convinced him that it was not possible to maintain it indefinitely. It had created bitterness, strife and dissensions in a very acute form. Baba Siri Chand, Datu, Baba Mohan, Prithi Chand, Dhir Mal and Ram Rai were all bitterly

offended in the matter of succession to Guruship. Prithi Chand went to the length of making an alliance with Chandu in order to avenge himself on Guru Arjan Dev, the younger brother, as he thought he had been bypassed in his favour. In Baba Bakala, 2 Sodhis had set themselves up as Gurus, each claiming the right to Guruship. Even the Masands, who were entrusted with the propagation of the Sikh Faith had spread tentacles of Gurudom far and wide and the Guru had to disown and punish them for practising villainies and repression to extort money from the gullible Sikhs, in the name of the Personal Guru. Thus, Guruship in the personal sense had been maintained for ten generations with the greatest difficulty and it was now time that it should go and its place be taken up by the Word. Yes, Guru Gobind Singh, had perished closing Guruship in the personal sense and sense, becoming imperishable, in the Word :—

‘ਸੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਹੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਮੁਖਿਉ’ ॥ ਭਟ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਵਯੇ ਮਹਲੇ ਪੰਜਵੇਂ ਕੇ ॥
 ‘Who can say (after this) that the Guru is dead’.

Swaiyya of the bard Harbans.

According to the Guru's last instructions, the funeral pyre was prepared inside a tent where none except the five Pyaras were allowed to enter. Perhaps, he had the fear that some over zealous Sikhs might jump into the fire, as some had done over the pyre of Guru Hargobind. He told them not even to wail over his earthly end but to think of God and His Word and sing the Praises of the Lord. The five Pyaras bathed his dead body and after the last prayers had been offered, they set fire to the pyre and the Guru departed to His Eternal Home.

The closing chapter—CHAPTER XVI

Guru Gobind Singh viewed as Guru Nanak's re-incarnation, in spirit

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'ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ' ।
ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਸਤਾ ਬਲਵੰਡ ॥

'His light and the way of his life, were basically the same as those of his Master (Guru Nanak). He was the Master's re incarnation, in spirit, as the other Sikh Gurus were'.

Var of Satta Balwand in Ramkali.

We propose to examine, in this last chapter, the Guru's teachings, rather closely, to show to the reader that the basic philosophy of the Guru was the same as that of his predecessors and there was no essential difference, from theirs in his outlook either. This seems necessary because so many good people honestly believe, through ignorance, of course, that he had set up a new dispensation or that he converted a peaceful movement into a military theocracy or that his philosophy of life was, in some way, a departure from that of the other Gurus. Clearly, we have come to the most important chapter of the book. On the face of it, it seems right that it should have been given the first place. But we wanted to deal with only such of the topics at the end as could not be covered quite exhaustively in the other chapters. In this way, we

have avoided repetitions and saved space. We shall begin with some of the most important Sikh doctrines. What is God, the Ultimate Eternal Reality? How the creation, in general, and man, in particular, are related to that Reality? Where has man come from and what is it that controls his destiny? If God is the Spiritual Presence that permeates sustains and animates the Universe and if man cannot live naturally without realising that Presence, what are the obstacles in the way of realisation and how are they to be removed? These are some of the really important questions that have, throughout ages, been furiously agitating thinking men's minds. The Guru answers these questions, completely in the same manner, as the other Gurus had done. For a devotee, he is accepted as the tenth incarnation of Guru Nanak, in spirit, and so, for him his philosophy can not be different from that of Guru Nanak. But all men are not devotees. There are many honest men having a lot of misunderstandings about him. It will help remove those misunderstandings, if we study his views and teachings rather independently of the other Gurus. Incidentally, we will, in this way also come to realise that he was a gigantic spiritual figure and his spiritual philosophy, both in height and breadth, is unique, profound and perfect. In height, it reaches its climax when it expresses God as the only Supreme Reality. In breadth, it is so wide and comprehensive, as to encompass in its embrace all great religions of the world. The thing that stands out clearly, however, is that it speaks the language of Guru Nanak, expressed rather forcefully. There is certainly a shift in the emphasis as necessitated by the change of times but that does not make any difference, in essentials. Guru Nanak, for instance, had said :

‘ਹਉਂ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰ ਕਾਰੇ ਲਾਇਆ’ ।

ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

'The Lord hath called to His Service a bard of no consequence, like me'.

Guru Nanak in Manjh.

But, Guru Gobind Singh had put the same thing in this way :

‘ਮੈਂ ਅਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੋਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ॥ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਬੇ ਕੋ ਸਾਜਾ’ ॥

“I bless thee to be my Son and I commission thee to propagate the Way”.

Again, Guru Nanak had prayed, thus : ‘O Lord, extirpate evil from the world’.

But, Guru Gobind Singh identified himself with God and said the same thing thus : ‘I would extirpate evil doers from the world’. Both statements are equally true, only, they were made by two persons in different contexts. One of them had come two centuries before the other. The one had yet to rouse the people to action while the other had actually become the leader of a nation and the nucleus of a movement determined to fight out the tyrants to the end. The one had rallied the people under his banner while the other had that as an aim merely and there lies the difference between the two. Guru Nanak had preached spiritual freedom from which every other freedom emerged, while Guru Gobind Singh gave it a concrete form by building on it the political emancipation of the people. How true is the following statement of Dr Gokal Chand I ‘Gobind himself in fact, as well as his work, was the natural product of the process of evolution that had been going on since the inception of Sikh brotherhood. The seed which blossomed in the time of Guru Gobind Singh had been sown by Nanak and watered by his successors. The sword which carved the Khalsa's way to glory was, undoubtedly, forged by Gobind but the steel had been provided by Nanak’.

It is entirely wrong to suppose that there was any real difference over the cherished ideals though there

was undoubtedly shift in the emphasis and direction as necessitated by the circumstances. The reader will remember that we noticed this shift in an earlier chapter too in respect of the Attributive Aspect of God-head. The two men were, thus, the same in spirit though their methods were not quite comparable due to the change of circumstances. The coming pages are intended to bring out the philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh expressed exclusively through his own writings. On this account, we have deliberately avoided, throughout the chapter, quotations from the compositions of the other Gurus. Now, let us begin with the concept of the Ultimate Reality.

God is presented in two aspects—the Impersonal or the Absolute (Nirgun) and the Personal or the Related (Sargun). He is without beginning and without end yet He is the Beginning of all things. Before the creation came into being there was nothing except the Impersonal God, without any attributes that human mind could comprehend. All the same, He was the Existence in the form of Consciousness. This Unfathomable Lord was endowed with an all-pervasive Will of His Own, Which Itself was Unfathomable and Wonderful. All else was then within Him in a state of oneness and as a single unit—all in Him, the subject and the object being still not distinct. This is the Absolute Aspect. But then He Willed to create and became manifest, i.e. He revealed Himself. This is the Personal Aspect. The Guru has put it, thus :

‘ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਬਗਤਿ ਅਬਨਾਸੀ ॥ ਲੋਕ ਚਤੁਰਦਸ ਜੋਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸੀ’ ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘He is the Primal Being, the Invisible and the Imperishable Lord. Yet, His Light manifesteth Itself in the fourteen worlds’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

Again :

'ਜਬ ਉਦਕਰਖ ਕਰਾ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ ॥ ਪਰਜਾ ਧਰਤ ਤਬ ਦੇਹ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥
ਜਬ ਆਕਰਖ ਕਰਤ ਹੋ ਕਬਹੂੰ ॥ ਤੁਮ ਮਹਿ ਮਿਲਤ ਦੇਹ ਧਰ ਸਬਹੂੰ' ॥
ਚੌਪਈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

'When, Thou, O Creator, projected Thyself, all creatures of the earth assumed diverse shapes. But whenever, O Lord, Thou drawest creation within Thyself, all embodied beings are absorbed in Thee'.

Guru Gobind Singh in Chaupai.

Again :

'ਏਕ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਨੇਕ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੀਨ ਰੂਪ ਅਨੇਕ ॥ ਖੇਲ ਖੇਲ
ਅਖੇਲ ਖੇਲਨ ਅੰਤ ਕੋ ਫਿਰ ਏਕ' ॥ ਜਾਪੁ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

'The One appeareth as many, manifested in various forms. He playeth the game and whenever He wisheth to Unplay it, He is the same One, again.

Guru Gobind Singh in Jap.

Again :

'ਜਲ ਕਹਾਂ ਬਲ ਕਹਾਂ ਗਗਨ ਕੇ ਗੌਨ ਕਹਾਂ ਕਾਲ ਕੇ ਬਨਾਇ ਸਭੇ
ਕਾਲ ਹੀ ਚਬਾਹਿੰਗੇ ॥ ਤੇਜ ਜਯੋਂ ਅਤੇਜ ਮੈਂ ਅਤੇਜ ਜੈਸੇ ਤੇਜ ਲੀਨ
ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਉਪਜ ਸਭੈ ਤਾਂਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਸਮਾਹਿੰਗੇ" ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

'Some live in water, some in land and some fly in the skies. God made them and He will destroy them too. As light blendeth with darkness and darkness with light, so all things have sprung from Him and shall be united in Him'.

Guru Gobind in Akal Ustat.

The above quotations point out that it was He who transformed Himself for self-expression, the Transformer remaining within His creation as also apart from it. Thus, He is both transcendent and immanent.

'ਜਲੇ ਹਰੀ ਥਲੇ ਹਰੀ ॥ ਓਰੇ ਹਰੀ ਬਨੇ ਹਰੀ ॥ ਗਿਰੇ ਹਰੀ ਗੁਫੇ
ਹਰੀ ॥ ਛਿਤੇ ਹਰੀ ਨਭੇ ਹਰੀ ॥ ਇਹਾ ਹਰੀ ਓਹਾ ਹਰੀ ॥ ਜਿਮੀ'

ਹਰੀ ਜਮਾ ਹਰੀ ॥ ਅਲੇਖ ਹਰੀ ਅਭੇਖ ਹਰੀ' ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

'God is in water and in the dry land. He is near as also far in the forest. He is in the mountains, in the caves, in the earth and in the skies. He is here, He is there. He is in time and in space. Yet, He is Unknowable and without Form'.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

Also, as everything has come out of Him, He is, in a sense, both matter and spirit. Thus, He is not merely within and without, He is Himself everything. This is pantheism, and is expressed thus :

'ਜਿਮੀ ਤੁਹੀ ਜਮਾ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਮਕੀਂ ਤੁਹੀ ਮਕਾਂ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਅਕੂ ਤੁਹੀ ਅਭੈ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਅਛੂ ਤੁਹੀ ਅਛੈ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਜਤਸ ਤੁਹੀ ਬਤਸ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਗਤਸ ਤੁਹੀ ਮਤਸ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਤੁਹੀ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਤੁਹੀ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਤੁਹੀ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਤੁਹੀ ਤੁਹੀ ॥ ਤੁਹੀ ਤੁਹੀ' ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

'Thou art Space, Thou art Time, Thou art the Place as also its Occupant. Yet, Thou art Unborn, Fearless, Impalpable and Indestructible. Thou art Contenance and Thou art Fasting. Thou, alone, art (and nothing else is)...

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

Here is how he explains the above :

'ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਆਗ ਤੇ ਕਿਨ੍ਹਕਾ ਕੋਟਿ ਆਗ ਉਠਹਿ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਹੁੰਕੇ ਫੇਰ ਆਗ ਮੈਂ ਮਿਲਾਹਿਗੇ ॥ ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਧੂਰ ਤੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਧੂਰ ਪ੍ਰਤਤ ਹੈ ਧੂਰ ਕੇ ਕਿਨ੍ਹਕਾ ਫੇਰ ਧਰ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਹਿਗੇ ॥ ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਨਦ ਤੇ ਤਰੰਗ ਕੋਟ ਉਪਜਤ ਹੈ ਪਾਨਿ ਕੇ ਤਰੰਗ ਸਭੇ ਪਾਨਿ ਹੀ ਕਹਾਹਿਗੇ ॥ ਤੈਸੇ ਵਿਸਵ ਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਭੂਤ ਭੂਤ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੁੰ ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਉਪਜ ਸਭ ਤਾਂਹੀ ਮੈਂ ਸਮਾਹਿਗੇ' ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

From one fire, millions of sparks of fire arise and in course of rising remain separate, yet they again merge in the same fire. From one heap of dust, innumerable particles of dust occupy the expanse in a distinct way and yet they again unite with the dust. From one stream millions of waves arise and yet these, being dema

of water, again become water. In the same way all sentient and non-sentient have emerged from the One Universal Being, yet having sprung from Him, they all are bound to be blended again in Him'.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

This is true advaitism. The Guru's writings, as shown above confirm that he was not only a monotheist but a monoist. For him, God is not only One but there is nothing except Himself. All the rest are emanations from Him. It is like the spider spinning out a web out of its own self. The web cannot be considered different from the spider, but a part of it. So also all that emanates from Him is, in a way, His Ownself. Further, He is present everywhere and in all things, from the lowest to the highest. In fact, He is present in every atom. Nature is the wonderful Book of His Revelations. All are lit by the same Fire, though revealed in different degrees, more in men than in lower forms of creation and from among men, more in good men than in the depraved. True, the Atma remains the supreme emanation. All the same, all are filled with Him. The worst of men have divine potentialities and are capable of attaining the highest state of manhood, through the divine spark in them.

‘ਜਿਤਕ ਜਗਤ ਕੇ ਜੀਵ ਬਖਾਨੋ ॥ ਏਕ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਨੋ’ ॥

ਚੌਬੀਸ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Recognise One Light in all beings that are known to us’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Chaubis-Avtar.

Again :

‘ਬਿਨ ਏਕ ਦੂਸਰ ਨਾਹਿ ॥ ਸਭ ਰੰਗ ਰੂਪਨ ਮਾਹਿ’ ॥

ਚੌਬੀਸ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘There is no other except God in all forms and colours’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Chaubis-Avtar.

Again :

ਏਕਹਿ ਆਪ ਸਭਿਨ ਮੇਂ ਬਿਆਪਾ ॥ ਸਭ ਕੋਈ ਭਿੰਨ ਭਿੰਨ ਕਰ
ਬਾਪਾ' ॥ ਚੌਬੀਸ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

'He alone resideth in all, yet, all are made to appear different'.

Guru Gobind Singh in Chaubis-avtar.

The above is the Advaita philosophy, in its truest form. The same is most wonderfully described by the Guru in his familiar composition, the Jap, expressed in musical notes of such romantic and classical variety as can touch deeply every awakened human mind. Let us examine this philosophy directly here

God is described through functional Attributes, Names and Epithets, both positive and negative. Here are some specimens of the negative kind, first : He is the Timeless (ਅਕਾਲੇ), Formless (ਅਰੂਪੇ), Indestructible (ਅਭੰਜੇ), Unconquerable (ਅਜੀਤੇ), Creedless (ਅਧਰਮੀ), Homeless (ਨਿਰਧਾਮੇ), Infallible (ਅਦਾਹੇ), Colourless (ਅਨੀਲੇ), Beginningless (ਅਨਾਦੇ), Unbreakable (ਅਛੇਦੇ), Unfathomable (ਅਗਾਧੇ), Limitless (ਅਪਾਰੇ), the One without physical form (ਅਭੂਤੇ), without country (ਨਿਰਦੇਸੇ), Garbless (ਨਿਰਭੇਸੇ), Desireless (ਨਿਰਕਾਮੇ), Invisible (ਅਲੋਕੇ), Unborn (ਅਜਨਮੇ), Uncreated (ਅਸਰਗੇ), Unknowable (ਅਗੰਮੇ), the One without Religion (ਅਮਜਬੇ), and so on.

Now, here are a few specimens of the positive kind :

He is the Benefactor (ਦਿਆਲੇ), the Sovereign of all (ਸਰਬ ਭੂਪੇ), the Sustainer of all (ਸਰਬ ਪਾਲੇ), the Creator (ਕ੍ਰਿਤਾਰੀ), the Kind Lord (ਕਰੀਮੇ), the Benign One (ਰਹੀਮੇ), the Enjoyer (ਪ੍ਰਭੋਗੇ), the One present in all (ਸੁਜੋਗੇ), the Friend (ਰਫੀਕੇ), the Many yet always the One (ਅਨੇਕ ਹੈਂ ਫਿਰ ਏਕ ਹੈਂ), the Beautiful (ਉਦਾਰੇ), the embodiment of Purity (ਨੇਕਲੰਕੀ ਸਰੂਪੇ), and so on.

Then there are apparently contradictory concepts. The Guru sees Him in all—high or low, good or bad, light or dark. First, he salutes Him as Light :

'ਨਮੋ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਚੰਦ੍ਰੇ ॥ ਨਮੋ ਭਾਨ ਭਾਨੇ' ॥

i.e. 'Salutation to the Moon of moons and to the Sun of suns'. But along with it he salutes Him as Darkness too.

‘ਨਮੋ ਅੰਧਕਾਰੇ ਨਮੋ ਤੇਜ ਤੇਜੇ’ ॥

i.e. 'Hail to the Light of lights and hail to the Darkness',

Again :

‘ਨਮੋ ਰਾਜਸੰ ਤਾਮਸੰ ਸ਼ਾਂਤ ਰੂਪੇ’ ॥

‘Adoration to Him who embodies Desire, Passion and Peace (i.e. all the three qualities)’.

Again, on the one hand, He is the King of kings (ਇੰਦ੍ਰਾਨ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ), and the Greatest among the great (ਬਾਲਾਨ ਬਾਲ), yet, on the other He is the meekest among the meek (ਰੰਕਾਨ ਰੰਕ). Again. He is not only the Embodiment of Peace (ਸ਼ਾਂਤ ਰੂਪੇ) but also the Creator of discord (ਕਲਹ ਕਰਤਾ). On the one hand, He is the Spirit of Beauty (ਅਲੰਕਾਰ ਅਲੰਕੇ) and on the other, He is Ugliness (ਕਲੰਕਾਰ ਰੂਪੇ), as well.

The thing emphasised here is that in this drama of life, it is God always who assumes all roles. It is He who prompts actors in the drama and yet remains apart. There is nothing having any independent existence of its own. The source of everything conceivable, whether good or bad, is God. Men are like actors in a drama playing different roles, but all have come from Him and play the roles assigned to them, which, in other words, implies according to their own Karma. He has staged the drama for His Own pleasure. True men quarrel and sometimes even kill each other. But this they do, through ignorance of their own make up. If they knew that they were one before the drama started and would again become one after the drama was done, they would realise that there was nothing to quarrel about. They would then enjoy the play as they would be aware that their opponents were not different from them. They grope in the dark, because they fail to realise the above fact. The multiplicity

that the eyes see is not a true multiplicity but is the result of illusion which enters within when one is unable to see the Hand of God working skilfully behind and gets attached to this thing or that. Caught up in delusion, men start believing that they are separate entities having nothing to do with the All-pervading Life, as such. They forget that if a dancer strikes many poses to sustain the excitement of the show, the basic truth remains that the personality behind these appearances is that of the dancer. Thus, unity underlies the seeming diversity in the world. Just as a person expresses diverse thoughts and feelings with the letters of one alphabet or as a painter paints different pictures with the same brush or as a musician sings different tunes out of the same set of seven notes and yet creates symphony, so also He creates variety as a pastime, through His Infinite Power. Fools, robbers, cheats, oppressors, mad men, saints, seers and all the rest of them play in this lovely and grand show, as He Wills. (He does not Will arbitrarily but on the basis of one's Karma.) In fact, it is always the Beloved Himself, disguised in various forms, that plays. The Guru says in Akal Ustat :

‘ਕਤਹੂੰ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਕੇ ਚਾਰ ਕੀਓ ਕਤਹੂੰ ਅਚਿੰਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸੋਵਤ
ਅਚੇਤ ਹੋ ॥ ਕਤਹੂੰ ਭਿਖਾਰੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਮਾਂਗਤ ਫਿਰਤ ਭੀਖ ਕਹੂੰ ਮਹਾਦਾਨਿ
ਹੁੰਦੇ ਮਾਂਗਿਓ ਧਨ ਦੇਤ ਹੋ ॥ ਕਹੂੰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਨ ਕੋ ਦੀਜਤ ਅਨੰਤ ਦਾਨ
ਕਹੂੰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਨ ਤੇ ਛੀਨ ਛਿਤਿ ਲੇਤ ਹੋ ॥ ਕਹੂੰ ਬੇਦ ਰੀਤਿ ਕਹੂੰ ਤਾਸਿਓ
ਬਿਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕਹੂੰ ਤ੍ਰਿਗਨ ਅਤੀਤ ਕਹੂੰ ਸਰਗਨ ਸਮੇਤ ਹੋ’ ॥

“In one place, Thou assumeth the role of a wise man, possessing superb intelligence, and in an other, of an ignorant person, having no cares, at all. In one place, Thou art a beggar roving about for alms and in an other, a great philanthropist bestowing gifts of wealth to the needy. At one time, Thou makest unlimited gifts to the kings and at an other Thou takest away their

territories from them. In one role Thou art a lover of the Vedas, and in the other, Thou art quite disinterested in them. At one time Thou art detached from the three qualities (Passion, Desire and Peace) and at another Thou art engrossed into them.

Again.

‘ਕਹੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਧਾਮੀ ਕਹੂੰ ਸਰਬ ਠੈਰ ਗਾਮੀ ਕਹੂੰ ਜਤੀ ਕਹੂੰ ਕਾਮੀ ਕਹੂੰ
ਦੇਤ ਰਹੂੰ ਲੇਤ ਹੋ’ ॥

“In one role Thou acceptest family life as the right thing and in another Thou roamest about from place to place. At one time Thou art a continent and at another lustful. In one place Thou art a giver and at another Thou art a beggar”.

Again :

‘ਕਹੂੰ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਸਾਤਕੀ ਤਾਮਸੀ ਹੋ ॥ ਕਹੂੰ ਜੋਗ ਬਿਦਯਾ ਧਰੇ ਤਾਪਸੀ
ਹੋ ॥ ਕਹੂੰ ਰੋਗ ਹਰਤਾ ਕਹੂੰ ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤੀ ॥ ਕਹੂੰ ਭੂਮਿ ਕੀ ਭੁਗਤ ਮੈਂ
ਭਰਮ ਜੁਗਤਾ’

‘In some roles Thou art involved in Desire, Peace and Passion and in others Thou engagest Thyself in austerities and in the study of yoga. In one place Thou art a dispeller of maladies, through the practice of the Yoga Way, and in another Thou gettest involved in the illusory things of the world”.

In this context there can be no hatred for any person because there is visible the essential and basic unity in the apparent diversity. There may seem so much evil, squalor, suffering and inequalities but against the background of Eternity nothing is evil, ugly or bad. The whole creation is born out of His Blissful Desire to express Himself in finite terms and the whole thing is so complex and yet wonderful to contemplate that its significance and meaning remain beyond the comprehension of human mind. Man relates good and evil to his own tastes, views and desires. He projects his own aims and preferences into the objective Universe. He

begins to imagine that all natural processes have only him in view, designed to subserve to his needs. When life presents its problems and difficulties he tries to associate them with God's Wrath, forgetting that He is beyond his little good or evil which, in fact, have no significance in the context of this limitless Universe where he is just an atom. Nature has its own wonderful design which it is seeking to fulfil, compared with which man's so-called aims are insignificant. He foolishly believes that he is the centre of gravity of the whole cosmos and his so-called pleasures and pains alone are the concern of life. He takes a partial view of things and is ignorant of the order and harmony prevailing in the Nature as a whole and wants things to happen the way he likes and according to his own petty judgements. What he calls bad may, at best, be so regarding the laws of his own nature and may not be bad from the point of view of the order and laws of Nature itself. Also Truth is always relative to one's desires, ambitions and intelligence. Good and evil are human terms not applicable to the limitlessness of Nature. In the perspective of Eternity and Infinity, ordinary notions of good or evil become petty and trivial. The best thing, therefore, always is to look to the numerous blessings of life which become evident when a man looks towards the less fortunate and less gifted. Then he realises that the world as a whole, is the mirror of Infinite Beauty, Light, Love, and Peace. The Creator Himself being the Supreme Good, Beauty and Bliss, there can be nothing in the world except Blissful, Beautiful and Good. It is illusion that creates diversity and plurality and produces the so-called evil. When a man attunes himself to the Will, illusion disappears, true perspective is reached and evil goes with it.

The so-called evil should therefore be considered to have a purpose in His Scheme of things. The glory

of light is augmented because there is darkness. It is shades that enhance the beauty of the pictures. The existence of poison makes the nectar sweeter. The rogue's part in a drama makes the drama work. Diseases bring forth the merit of health. The fabric of human life is, thus, composed of both black and white. Here, all should be considered as subject to error, even the best of men. On the other hand, none is the embodiment of absolute evil. All are in the process of evolution and are heading towards Him. Sinners are also saints in the making. All are working out their own destinies. Children make progress when they are allowed to work for themselves. They must draw their own pictures, good or bad, in order to learn the art of drawing. Teachers and parents may give suggestions and guidance. In the mistakes they make lies the secret of their progress and advance. So also God guides from within but in His own way depending on the seekers individual efforts. Trials, tribulations and struggles promote development of personality and character than which there can be nothing richer or higher. To suffer pains and to endure hardships are the qualities of the strong in spirit. Hardships add to one's spiritual stock and therefore may be considered as an aspect of His Grace. Also it is wrong to suppose that there can be any unmerited inequality or victimisation. Man's own vision is narrow and distorted. He does not realise that pain and suffering may be curers of ills, testers of fortitude and builders of character. God has His Own way of opening eyes of men. When they suffer as a result of their own weaknesses it is only then that they begin to look upon life from a new perspective, otherwise they go on unmindful of consequences. Left to themselves they will not understand their shortcomings. When God's so-called Wrath falls on them it is time they looked within themselves. Suffering is one of the ways

God has for improving man by bringing out the best in him. It is in suffering that love, courage, patience and sympathy are called forth in him.

By presenting the above picture, as expressed through the lines quoted from the Jap and the Akal ustat, the Guru means to point out that God is the indweller in all men, good or bad, high or low and is carrying on His Play. Therefore all distinctions between man and man built on any basis, whatsoever, must disappear. An eye must be developed that should see Him present in all, even in bad men. Love should, on that account, become the basis of human relationship, out of which service should flow automatically as the practical expression of oneness with all. It is a sick mind that is unable to see Him in all. Of course, He is more clearly seen in holy human forms but there is no place where He is not. If, then, He resides in all, there is no room for hatred, anger, lust or passion. The whole life must be dedicated, in word, thought and deed, to Him. Selfish desires must be cast off. In dedication, detachment and self-abnegation, the soul will shine in its original purity. Service will become life's mission. But it is enlightenment that produces the right vision and then all becomes good, true and beautiful. Man chooses the path of sin as a result of illusion and when he is out of tune with the Source of his being. He must come back to Him and learn to live in Him, in order to be redeemed.

Now, what is meant by coming back to Him and why is it so necessary and how has this to be achieved? We have said above that God resides in every heart. The essence behind the body with its organs of peception, intellect, mind and consciousness is the unseen master, the spirit, the soul, which, if awakened, controls the whole machinery. The brain, the will, the emotions, the consciousness and the intelligence are

all its instruments but it itself is distinct from them all and yet controls their functions, on self realisation. The body belongs to the material world but the spirit or the soul in it is in the essence of God—the Principle behind the visible world. This Principle behind the world is the Supreme Essence or the Absolute Spirit from which the body, the universe and the soul, have all emanated and which is beyond all of them. This one Fundamental Principle, called God, is beyond both matter and spirit and from It the entire world, including the spirit and the matter, have sprung. Now, so far as the consciousness, one of the instruments of the soul is concerned, it putrifies along with the rest of its instruments. Guru Nanak has explained this phenomenon, thus :

‘ਦੇਹੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਬੋਲੈ ਪਉਣੁ ॥ ਬੁਝ ਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮੂਆ ਹੈ ਕਉਣੁ ॥
ਮੂਈ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਬਾਦੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ॥ ਉਹ ਨ ਮੂਆ ਜੋ ਦੇਖਣਹਾਰੁ’ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘The body is mere earth, in which the air speaketh. Tell me, O wise man, what is it that Dies? It is the consciousness, with its ego and strife, that dies, not the soul that watches helplessly all this phenomenon. The use of the term Surat (ਸੁਰਤਿ) for consciousness here that produces the life of ego and strife i.e. the life of sin and suffering, is also contained in another very important hymn of Guru Nanak, again, a part of which we give below :—

‘ਏਕਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਜੇਤੇ ਹੈ ਜੀਅ ॥ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਵਿਹੂਣਾ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕੀਅ ॥ ਜੇਹੀ
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਤੇਹਾ ਤਿਨ ਰਾਹ ॥ ਲੇਖਾ ਏਕੋ ਆਵਹੁ ਜਾਹੁ ॥ ਕਾਹੇ ਜੀਅ ਕਰਹਿ
ਚਤਰਾਈ ॥ ਲੇਵੈ ਦੇਵੈ ਢਿਲ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥’

ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

‘All beings are endowed with the same consciousness and there is none without it. But as is the quality of this consciousness (in any being at its own stage of evolution), so as the way (of life followed by that

being). Accounts are built by the one and the same (un-erring law), resulting in one's coming and going (in a cycle of transmigration) O my mind, what availeth it thee to practise cleverness? (How insignificant are the mind and its pretensions in the context of the Unfathomable and the Omnipotent Lord, working through His unerring Laws)? Remember, it is He that giveth this conscious and hath the Power too to take it back in a moment (Evidently, the Guru is conscious of the terrible suffering of mankind, as a result of the unerring Law of Karma).

From the above elaboration, we can conclude as under :

[i] So long as one's Atma does not come to its own and remains merely a watcher, the consciousness rules life and produces a life of sin, strife, ego and sufferings, resulting in one's coming and going (transmigration).

[ii] All human beings, big or small, live their lives in the grip of the Karma Law and consequent transmigration from the time they take birth and this will go on till the awakening of their souls, takes place.

[iii] In this category, the Gurus, the Avtars, the Prophets, the Pirs and the Sons of God, are all included. This is because it is only the Lord who is Ajuni (i.e. never takes birth), or as Guru Gobind Singh depicts Him as Ajanme (ਅਜਨਮੇ) in his Jap.

The Supreme Essence, according to Guru Gobind Singh is not limited by Name, Form, Time and Space and is the Permanent and the Unchangeable Basic Element :

‘ਨਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਨ ਜਾਤਿ ਜਾਕਹ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਨ ਰੇਖ ॥ ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ
ਉਦਾਰ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੇਨ ਆਦਿ ਅਸ਼ੇਖ’ ॥ ਜਾਪੁ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘He is without Name, Abode, Form, Colour, and Features. He is the Primal Being, the Gracious Lord, the Unborn, the Beginning of all, and the Perfect One’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Jap.

The soul, the Universe and God are not all distinct and permanent Realities, because the soul and the

universe are real and permanent only in the relative sense. Both are the creation of the Supreme that sustains them and it comes about when He Wills to create. Thus, there is nothing eternal and self-existent except God. He is the sole Creative Agency as also the Sustainer and the Destroyer. He is indivisibly One and above every other being, however highly conceived by the world. Thus, all that is, has its source in Him and is subject to His Laws, His Will :

‘ਜਾਲ ਬਧੇ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਕੇ ਕੋਊ ਰਾਮ ਰਖੁਲ ਨ ਬਾਚਨ ਪਾਏ’ ॥
 ਤੇਤੀ ਸਵੈਯੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੭ ॥

“All are subject to the noose of Death (and consequent transmigration) Avtars like Rama and Prophets like Mohammad (and Gurus like Guru Nanak) do not escape this noose”.

Yet, the two—God and the soul—are as stated above, identical in the same way as fire and its sparks or as the sun and its rays or as the mirror and its reflection. There is difference not of essence but as between a drop of water and the endless sea

It means clearly that man has a profound relationship with Him, it is in Him that he lives and has his whole being. The implication is that it is not possible for him to live without Him or even to ignore Him. He is to man as air is to life or as water to the fish, or as mountain to the stream or as mother to her child. A lamp will not burn without oil. The lotus will not retain its fragrance, lustre and beauty, if it did not remain with the plant, from which it grew. Water cut off from the main stream into a separate pond will become dirty and unfit for human use. So, does man meet a similar fate if he remains cut off from his Source. He must realise his true spiritual self, through reunion with Him, otherwise he would remain in the cycle of births and deaths. Thus, separation from Him is the basis of sufferings, The spark must merge in the fire, the wave must merge

in the expanse of the sea and the soul must be reunited with the unseen Universal Soul for its fulfilment. The Guru says :

‘ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਪਗ ਲਾਗੋ ॥ ਸੋਵਤ ਕਹਾਂ ਮੋਹ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਮੈਂ ਕਬਹੂ
ਸੁਚਿਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਗੋ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਔਰਨ ਕਹਾਂ ਉਪਦੇਸਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ ਤੋਹਿ
ਪ੍ਰਬੋਧ ਨ ਲਾਗੋ ॥ ਸੰਚਤ ਕਹਾਂ ਪਰੇ ਬਿਖਅਨ ਕੋ ਕਬਹੂ ਬਿਖੈ ਰਸ
ਤਿਆਗੋ ॥ ਕੈਵਲ ਕਰਮ ਭਰਮ ਸੇ ਚੀਨਹੁ ਧਰਮ ਕਰਮ ਅਨੁਰਾਗੋ ॥
ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਕਰੋ ਸਦਾ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕੋ ਪਰਮ ਪਾਪ ਤਜ ਭਾਗੋ ॥ ਜਾਤੇ ਦੁਖ ਪਾਪ
ਨਹਿ ਭੇਟੈ ਕਾਲ ਜਾਲ ਤੇ ਤਾਗੋ ॥ ਜੋ ਸੁਖ ਚਾਹੋ ਸਦਾ ਸਭਹਿਨ ਕੋ ਤੋ
ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਰਸ ਪਾਗੋ’ । ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘O man, take thou the shelter of the Supreme. Why sleepest thou the sleep of worldly attachments? Think of Him even now and remain alert. Why dost thou preach to others when thou actest not on it thyself? Why indulge in sensual passions? Give up all passions, forthwith. All acts divorced from love are errors; so ever base thy actions and faiths on love. Accumulate the love of God renouncing sins and ever fleeing from them. In this way thou shalt not meet sorrow or sin and escape from the noose of death (and transmigration). If thou desirest eternal happiness of every sort, be absorbed in the love of God’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Shabad Hazare.

Now since the Unknown and the Unseen Spirit resides in the human soul, the way to reach Him is also through the soul itself, as both It and the soul are fundamentally one and the same. This means that the search for Him must proceed within. He is self-realisable i.e. every man can know and realise Him in and through his own soul. Man must, therefore, seek and find him within himself

But how to do it when He is Infinite and Incomprehensible? Man's own experience of the world is mainly perceptual and conceptual and the finite human mind, limited in time and space, can bring under the domain

of its weak and limited understanding only what is finite and limited. But He is Infinite and beyond the organs of perception, and beyond intellect and brain and therefore beyond man's comprehension. The Guru says in Jap :

'ਨਿਰੁਕਤ ਸਦਾ ਹੈ' ॥ ਬਿਭੁਗਤ ਪ੍ਰਭਾ ਹੈ' ॥ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ' ॥
ਪ੍ਰਜੁਗਤ ਅਨੂਪ ਹੈ' ॥

'Thou art ever ineffab'e, Thou art unique in Thy Glory. Thy Form is beyond thought, yet Thou art Sublime, united with all'.

Again, in Gyan Parbodh, he says :

'ਖਯਾਲ ਮੈਂ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਗਮਤਾ ਕੋ ਸਦਾ ਖਾਈਐ' ॥

'He cannot be brought in the domain of intellect, the attempt to do so ends in smoke'.

And, in the Prologue to Jap, the Guru says :

"ਚਕ੍ਰ ਚਿਹਨ ਅਰੁ ਬਰਨ ਜਾਤਿ ਅਰ ਪਾਤਿ ਨਾਹਿਨ ਜਿਹ ॥
ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਅਰ ਰੇਖ ਭੇਖ ਕੋਊ ਕਹਿ ਨ ਸਕਤ ਕਿਹ ॥ ਅਚਲ
ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ ਅਮਿਤੋਜ ਕਹਿਜੈ ॥ ਕੋਟਿ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਇੰਦ੍ਰਣ
ਸ਼ਾਹ ਸ਼ਾਹਾਨ ਗਣਿਜੈ ॥ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਮਹੀਪ ਸੁਰ ਨਰ ਅਸੁਰ ਨੇਤਿ
ਨੇਤਿ ਬਣ ਤ੍ਰਿਣ ਕਹਿਤ ॥ ਤਵ ਸਰਬ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੈ ਕਵਨ ਕਰਮ
ਨਾਮ ਬਰਣਤ ਸੁਮਤਿ' ॥

'He hath no marks, Signs, Colour, Caste and Lineage; no one can describe His Form, Hue, Features and Garbs. He is the Immovable Being, Self-existent and His Power is Immeasurable. He is the King of countless Indras. He is the Supreme Lord of the three worlds, whom gods, men, demons and even grass blades of the woods declare : 'He is not this, not this'. Yet all Names are Thine. O Lord, who can count them? The wise however have related Thy functional names only since the Supreme is 'not this, not this'.

The Supreme is, thus, Unknowable and Indescribable, and therefore beyond the mind and the intellect. And how can mere intellectual or mental descriptions of Him produce realisation? Could the beauty of the moon ever

reach the heart through being merely explained or talked about by another persons? It has to be personally experienced. So also the realisation of union with Him is a matter of experience in the soul itself and this experience is attained in a state of higher level of consciousness, beyond the perceptual and the conceptual. The Guru emphasises this point thus :

‘ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਵਿਖੈ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ ਜਾਨ ਲੇਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਮਨ ਮਾਹੀ’ ॥

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘God is not in Vedas and Kitebas. O men, find Him out in your own heart’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Bachittar Natak.

A state of super—consciousness is to be acquired, in which the timeless and the spaceless spirit becomes aware of its own Original Self. Thus, the experience, in this case, is neither perceptual nor conceptual. It is what may be called intuitional. To achieve it, purity, peace of mind, devotion, keenness of introspection and self-control are the minimum essential conditions.

Again;

‘ਅਪਨੋ ਮਨ ਕਰ ਮੈਂ ਜਿਹ ਆਨਾ ॥ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੋ ਤਿਨੈ ਪਛਾਣਾ’ ॥

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘He who controled his own mind, realiseth the Supreme Essence’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Bachittar Natak.

The Guru explains, how this could be done :

‘ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਲੋਭ ਹਠ ਮੋਹ ਨ ਮਨ ਸੋ ਲਿਆਵੈ ॥ ਤਬ ਹੀ ਆਤਮ ਤਤ ਕੋ ਦਰਜੈ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਹਿ ਪਾਵੈ’ ॥

ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੇ, ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘Rid thy mind of lust, wrath, covetousness, obstinacy and attachment. Thou shalt then be qualified to behold the Supreme Essence of the world and meet Him’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Shabad Hazare.

Guru Amar Dass had said the same thing, thus :

‘ਚਾਲ ਨਿਰਾਲੀ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਕੇਰੀ ਬਿਖਮ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਚਲਣਾ ॥ ਲਬੁ ਲੋਭੁ

ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਤਜਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਬੋਲਣਾ ॥ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩
 'Distinct from others is the way of life of the Bhaktas as they have to tread the hard path—they have to shed avarice, covetousness, pride, cravings and boast not much, being involved within for throwing out evils etc'. But the fulfilment of these conditions are meant to help create the spiritual awareness. The actual union is to be brought about by the love (Simran) of the Name. It is Simran really that creates eyes of love and provides the highest spiritual experience of union with Him. Without this experience life is a waste. The Guru explains :

'ਬਿਨ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਨ ਬਾਚਨ ਪੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਚੰਦਰ ਲੋਕ ਜਾਂਹਿ ਬਸ ਕੀਨੇ ਤਾਂ
 ਤੇ ਕਹਾਂ ਪਲੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਉਬਾਰ ਨ ਸਾਕਹਿ
 ਜਾਂਕਰ ਨਾਮ ਰਟੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨ ਰੁਦ੍ਰ ਸੂਰਜ ਸਸਿ ਤੇ ਬਸ ਕਾਲ
 ਸਬੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕੁਰਣ ਸਭੈ ਮਤ ਜਾਂਕਰ ਨੇਤ ਕਹੈ ਹੈ ॥
 ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਵੁਨਿੰਦਰ ਮੁਨਿੰਦਰ ਕਲਪ ਬਹੁ ਧਯਾਵਤ ਧਯਾਨ ਨ ਐ ਹੈ ॥
 ਜਾਂਕਰ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਨਹਿ ਜਨਿਅਤ ਸੋ ਕਿਮ ਸਯਾਮ ਕਹੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਛਟਹੋ
 ਕਾਲ ਜਾਲ ਤੇ ਤਬ ਹੀ ਤਾਂਹਿ ਚਰਨ ਲਪਟੈ ਹੈ' ॥

ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

'Without the love of His Name, no one can be saved. How can one flee from Him who holdeth the world in His Power (All live and move in Him and so He is the breath of their lives. How can, then, they live without Him) ? Ram or Rahim whose name people repeat, would not save nor would Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva save. All of them are subject to the power of Death and are therefore impermanent. The Vedas, the Puranas, the Quran and the diverse faiths declare, 'He is 'Not this', i.e. beyond our experiences the Unfathomable Indras, Sheshnag, the great munis, meditated on Him for ages, but they could form no idea of Him (because He could be known only through the Name)

How can He who hath no colour or form be called the

Krishna, who had black colour ? By clinging to His Feet alone, one is freed from the noose of Death'.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Shabad Hazare.

Again :

‘ਧਿਆਨ ਪਰੋ ਤਿਹ ਕੋ ਮਨ ਮੈਂ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ ਅਮਿਤੋਜ ਸਭੈ ਜਗ ਛਾਯੋ ॥
ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Meditate on Him, Whose immeasurable Power is diffused in all, throughout the world’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

Again :

‘ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕਤੇਬ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਅਭੇਦ ਨਿਰਪਾਨ ਸਭੈ ਪਚਹਾਰੇ ॥
ਭੇਦ ਨ ਪਾਇ ਸਕੈ ਅਨਭੇਦ ਕੋ ਖੇਦਤ ਹੈ ਅਨਛੇਦ ਪੁਕਾਰੇ ॥ ਰਾਗ ਨ
ਰੂਪ ਨ ਰੇਖ ਨ ਰੰਗ ਨ ਸਾਕ ਨ ਸੋਗ ਨ ਸੰਗ ਤਿਹਾਰੇ ॥ ਆਦਿ
ਅਨਾਦਿ ਅਗਾਧ ਅਭੇਖ ਅਦ੍ਰੋਖ ਜਪਯੋ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਕੁਲ ਤਾਰੇ’ ॥
ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘The Vedas, the Puranas, the Quran and the Semetic Books have not found His Secret. Many kings (like Harish Chandar) have failed to know Him. How could they find the Secret of the Inscrutable ? They had undergone hardships to find Him but had to admit that He was Unknowable. O Lord, Thou hast no passion, no form, no feature, no colour, no relation, no sorrow, no companion. Thou wert in the Beginning, yet Thou art without Beginning. Thou art Unfathomable, without distinctive garb and without jealousy. Yet, he who meditateth on Thy Name shall be able to save (himself) and all others related to him’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

The Guru is pointing out here that various methods to find Him have been tried already by seekers without yielding fruit because their pursuit was incomplete and misdirected, without the Name. He is realisable in the soul, through the love of the Name.

Again :

‘ਤਨ ਸੀਤ ਘਾਮ ਬਰਖਾ ਸਹੰਤ ॥ ਕਈ ਕਲਪ ਏਕ ਆਸਨ ਬਿਤੰਤ ॥

ਕਈ ਜਤਨ ਜੋਗ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਬਿਚਾਰ ॥ ਸਾਧਤੈ ਤਦਪਿ ਪਾਵਤ ਨ
ਪਾਰ' ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

'Some allow their bodies to suffer from cold, heat and rain (in their search for Him), some sit in affixed postures for a full age, some try to find Him through the science of Yoga. Men strive in various ways but find not the Lord's Limits'.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

Again :

'ਵਿਸੁਪਾਲ ਜਗਤ ਕਾਲ ਦੀਨ ਦਯਾਲ ਬੈਰੀਸਾਲ ਸਦ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲ
ਜਮਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਟਾਧਾਰੀ ਸਤੀ ਸਾਚੇ ਥੜੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਾਰੀ
ਧਯਾਨ ਕਾਜ ਭੂਖ ਪਯਾਸ ਦੇਹ ਪੈ ਸਹਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਨਿਉਲੀ ਕਰਮ ਜਲ
ਹੋਮ ਪਾਵਕ ਪਵਨ ਹੋਮ ਅਧੋਮੁਖ ਏਕ ਪਾਇ ਠਾਢੇ ਨ ਬਹਿਤ ਹੈ ॥
ਮਾਨਵ ਫਨਿੰਦ ਦੇਵ ਦਾਨਵ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ਭੇਦ ਵੇਦ ਅੰ ਕਤੇਬ ਨੇਤਿ ਨੇਤਿ
ਕੈ ਕਹਿਤ ਹੈ' ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

'He is the Protector as also the Destroyer of the world. He is Merciful to the poor, punishes the enemy, is ever the Sustainer and is free from Death's noose. The jogis, the wearers of matted hair, the celibates, the true ones, the great Brahmcharis, they who suffer hunger and thirst by remaining constantly in meditations, they who undergo newali feats, they who make sacrifices to the gods of fire water and wind, they who hold down their breath, stand on one leg and never sit, and finally men, serpents, gods, demons—all these find not His Secret. The Vedas and Kitebas all declare Him to be 'Not this, Not this'.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

Again :

'ਤੀਰਥ ਕੋਟ ਕੀਏ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨ ਦੀਏ ਬਹੁ ਦਾਨ ਮਹਾਂ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਧਾਰੇ ॥ ਦੇਸ
ਫਿਰਯੋ ਕਰ ਭੇਸ ਤਪੋ ਧਨ ਕੇਸ਼ ਧਰੇ ਨ ਮਿਲੇ ਹਰਿ ਪਿਆਰੇ ॥ ਆਸਨ
ਕੋਟ ਕਰੇ ਅਸ਼ਟਾਂਗ ਧਰੇ ਬਹੁ ਨਯਾਸ ਕਰੇ ਮੁਖ ਕਾਰੇ ॥ ਦੀਨ ਦਯਾਲ
ਅਕਾਲ ਭਜੇ ਬਿਨ ਅੰਤ ਕੋ ਅੰਤ ਕੋ ਧਾਮ ਸਿਧਾਰੇ' ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Men perform millions of ablutions at pilgrim stations, make offerings and endure great fasts. Dressed like penitents and putting on long hair they wander about in countries from one place to the other but have failed to find the Beloved. Many make postures of contemplation and different prostrations and make so many efforts, with blackened faces. But without meditating on the Deathless Lord, Who is also Compassionate to the poor, they go at last to the abode of Death’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

Here is another hymn in which the Guru is more emphatic and categorical :

‘ਸੋਧਹਾਰੇ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਬਿਰੋਧਹਾਰੇ ਦਾਨੋ ਬਡੇ ਬੋਧਹਾਰੇ ਬੋਧਕ ਪ੍ਰਬੋਧ ਹਾਰੇ
ਜਾਪਸੀ ॥ ਘਸਹਾਰੇ ਚੰਦਨ ਲਗਾਏ ਹਾਰੇ ਚੋਆ ਚਾਰ ਪੁਜਹਾਰੇ ਪਾਹਨ
ਚਢਾਇ ਹਾਰੇ ਲਾਪਸੀ ॥ ਗਾਹ ਹਾਰੇ ਗੋਰਨ ਮਨਾਇ ਹਾਰੇ ਮਤੀ ਮਟ
ਲੀਪ ਹਾਰੇ ਭੀਤਨ ਲਗਾਇ ਹਾਰੇ ਛਾਪਸੀ ॥ ਗਾਇ ਹਾਰੇ ਗੰਧਰਬ
ਬਜਾਏ ਹਾਰੇ ਕਿੰਨਰ ਸਭ ਪਚ ਹਾਰੇ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਤਪੰਤ ਹਾਰੇ ਤਾਪਸੀ’ ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Gods have failed who reform others, demons in opposition to the gods have failed too. The wise with all the wisdom exercised by them have failed and so also those have failed who repeat particular names to impress others. Those who grind sandals and apply it to themselves as also those who apply essence of roses have failed. Those who worship stones and offer food to them, those who visit cemeteries and burial places and those who smear walls or get marked with the brand of idols (In Dwarka, people got themselves branded with hot iron bearing the ensign of Vishnu) have failed. Heavenly musicians singing, Kinnars beating their musical instruments, Pandits lost in their wisdom and penitents in their penances, all have failed (because they lacked the one thing that really mattered—the Name)’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

All these quotations show that the greatest emphasis in the Guru's teachings is on the Simran or the Jap of the Name. Simran according to him, is the most valuable possession a man may have. It gives real and permanent life and is the truest cure against sin and suffering of every kind. The Guru gives short lines also, on the subject :

‘ਜਿਨ ਜਿਨ ਨਾਮ ਤਿਹਾਰੇ ਧਿਆਇਆ ॥ ਦੂਖ ਪਾਪ ਤਿਨ ਨਿਕਟ
ਨ ਆਇਆ’ ॥ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘They who meditate on Thy Name are freed from sin and suffering’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Bachittar Natak.

Again :

‘ਜਿਨ ਨਰ ਨਾਮ ਤਿਹਾਰੇ ਕਹਾ ॥ ਦਾਰਿਦ ਦੁਸਟ ਦੋਖ ਤੇ ਰਹਾ’ ॥
ਚੌਪਈ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘They who dwell on Thy Name throw off sin, sloth and evil influences’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Chaupai.

Again;

‘ਤਵੇਕ ਨਾਮੁਚਾਰੀਅੰ ॥ ਅਨੰਤ ਦੂਖ ਟਾਰੀਅੰ’ ॥
ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘By uttering Thy Name, all sufferings depart’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Bachittar Natak.

Again :

‘ਜਪੋ ਤਾਸ ਨਾਮੰ ॥ ਸਰੈ ਸਰਬ ਕਾਮੰ’ ॥
ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘I dwell on His Name and succeed in all my undertakings’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Bachittar Natak.

Again :

‘ਭਜਯੋ ਸੁ ਏਕ ਨਾਮਯੰ ॥ ਜੁ ਕਾਮ ਸਰਬ ਠਾਮਯੰ ॥ ਨ ਜਾਪ ਆਨ ਕੋ
ਜਪੋ ॥ ਨ ਐਰ ਥਾਪਨਾ ਬਪੋ’ ॥ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘I dwell on the One Name that serves me in all situations. I meditate not on any except Him nor instal the other for worship’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Bachittar Natak.

And, in a nutshell, this is how he repeats the glory of thy Name :

‘ਭਜੋ ਹਰੀ, ਥਪੋ ਹਰੀ, ਤਪੋ ਹਰੀ, ਜਪੋ ਹਰੀ’ ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Repeat His Name, Instal Him for Worship, do thy penance unto Him and meditate on His Name’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

We may now explain briefly what Simran of the Name is which is given the highest priority in the Sikh Gurus' teachings. Of course, the word 'simran' literally means 'to remember' and the word 'Name' stands for God and all that He represents. It symbolises Him in the same way as any specific name, say, Allah or Hari or Ram does. The Simran of the Name, therefore, signifies remembering God. It implies the love of God, expressed through uttering His Name lovingly, remembering Him with devotional spirit, meditating on Him through the Guru's Word, concentrating on His Attributes and surrendering to Him in His Love and Service. The Guru claims that through this kind of Simran and in this comprehensive sense, the highest state of spiritual awareness leading to perfection is attained, and then the soul comes in possession of its real self. Enlightenment is reached which destroys Illusion or Duality, that had created division everywhere. Yields to the consciousness of the unity of all life and, in consequence of it, truth, love, goodness, bliss and freedom, the soul's true ingredients, flow as continually in life as light and warmth flow from the sun. The Atman (soul) is re-united with the Universal Atma (soul). This is union or the merger of the soul (self) with the All-pervading Soul (Universal Self) and is expressed figuratively as the union between the husband and the wife, between the lover and the beloved.

To visualise this state of union we must first go back to the conception of God, that we were examining, being described in two aspects—the Impersonal and the Personal. The Impersonal God is Unperceivable, Indefinable, Unfathomable, Unreachable, beyond time and space and without attributes that human mind may comprehend. It is only when He reveals Himself in His Creation, that He becomes related and conceivable, though to a limited extent, possessing moral, social, emotional, intellectual and other attributes that humans can understand. For instance, He is a Moral Being and it is man's own moral sense that proves it, since this moral sense, however imperfect at the present stage of his evolution, could have come to him from the Source of his being. It must be the reflex or the projection of the Supreme. One can, of course, see that this reflection is more marked in the perfected human minds than in others. But this only proves that He should be considered as the Most Perfect Moral Being, having Truth, Love, Wisdom and Goodness etc., as His Highest Attributes.

Now it is not difficult to realise that the worship of the Personal God as conceived above is easier to engage the mind, than that of the Impersonal God. The embodied human mind cannot easily fix upon or meditate on an object which it cannot visualise in concrete terms. It needs something concrete as a means of support for the purposes of concentration. For instance, if the eye had not seen the red, the white or the black colour, it could not form any idea of colour. In view of this difficulty God has to be given a name. But what name? The Guru says in Jap :

‘ਤਵ ਸਰਬ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੇ ਕਵਨ’ ॥

‘All names are Thine, O Lord, who can count them’ ?

So every Name is good enough. In fact, everything

existing is His Manifestation, revealing His Glory and is, therefore, His Name. As we have seen, the Guru has described in Jap hundreds of His Names which are all His Functional Names. Yet, He is above all Names i.e. He cannot be circumscribed or limited by a mere name even though seers had to give Him not only Name but even form. Deities were symbolised in forms, though He is Formless, the symbols serving merely as aids in the process of His realisation. But gradually symbols began to be accepted as actually possessing powers that really belonged to God and this led to idol worship, resulting in narrowness of perspective and mental debasement. It was forgotten that what was accessible to the eyes, the ears and the other sense organs could not be the true Name. The power of redemption could not come to be possessed by the mere symbol, however high sounding it might be. It comes from the All-pervading One that alone has the power to redeem. If this point is clearly understood there is nothing wrong to employ any name to express Him to us. If the mind is in communion with Him, any name is good enough, even though He is Anami i.e. without Name as the Guru calls Him in his Jap. But although names have no inherent efficacy nor are they to be treated as charms, yet they get sanctified by tradition, being associated with the ecstatic experiences of the seekers who employed them and were inspired too by them. The word 'Wahiguru' (Wonderful Lord), for instance, had found currency among the Sikhs as a specific name for purposes of meditation. And this name was quite suitable for expressing the emotion of wonder and ecstatic joy that God's Vision had to produce. Yet, whatever the name, it was always intended as an aid to work up and activate the mind for contact with higher regions where alone was the soul to meet

the Universal Soul. According to the definition of a line, it has no thickness and is therefore undrawable. Yet, it has to be drawn for the purposes of stimulating understanding. In the same way, God has to be given a name to serve as a symbol of His Personality, in all its diverse Aspects. The Name thus clothed with Attributes presents a Person who speaks with us, loves us, leads us to the path of truth, Whom we call our own and with Whom we establish direct relations. This Person feels for us in our pain, alleviates our sufferings and forgives our sins, if we deserve it. He is a dear Father, a Friend, a Refuge, the Embodiment of love and kindness. He is Just, Wise, endowed with best of Virtues, He is Beauty, Truth and an Ocean of Sweetness. He is the Creator, endowed with a Will. He is the Sustainer, the Compassionate Lord and has a keen sense of values. He is ever ready to meet us if we are ready for it. Here is a specimen of the All-loving Nature of God as described by the Guru in Akal Ustat :

‘ਰੋਗਨ ਤੇ ਅਰ ਸੋਗਨ ਤੇ ਜਲ ਜੋਗਨ ਤੇ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਂਤ ਬਚਾਵੈ । ਸਤ੍ਰੁ
ਅਨੇਕ ਚਲਾਵਤ ਘਾਵ ਤਰ੍ਹੀ ਤਨ ਏਕ ਨ ਲਾਗਤ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਰਾਖਤ ਹੈ
ਅਪਨੋ ਕਰ ਦੇ ਕਰ ਪਾਪ ਸੰਬੂਹ ਨ ਭੇਟਨ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਐਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਤ ਕਹਾਂ
ਕਹਿ ਤੋਸੋ ਸੁ ਪੇਟ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪਟ ਬੀਚ ਬਚਾਵੈ’ ॥

‘He protecteth thee from diseases, sorrows and sea-monsters, in a hundred ways. The enemies may be lying in wait to strike thee but thou wilt not receive the blow, if He Wills it. His Protective Hand is ever over thy head and therefore no evil can approach thee. What greater proof of His Protective Nature can be adduced than that He taketh care in the mother's womb’.

When the Personal God, as visualised above, becomes the object of worship, it can generate a dynamic force to vitalise the embodied soul, in both mind and

body. This is Bhakti cult. It has to be done with intense love, devotion and faith, so that the mind, in this psychological setting, gets emotional experiences, becomes purified by love and is awakened to the higher and unknown realms. Love and faith generate limitless power and are the bases on which the doctrine of the Name stands. The love of the Name is a means for acquiring, in the long run, a non-dualistic state of becoming one with God, a state in which all illusions disappear. To receive pure energy and spiritual power from the boundless Reservoir with which the soul has to make its contact, it is necessary to have a pure and an undisturbed mind, perfectly at peace with itself and with the surroundings. God as Person supplies the devotees emotional needs, so that the spiritual awareness is generated to enthuse and inspire and to fill the soul with joy, energy and vitality. It illumines the mind and dispels the mist of ego, by inducing a complete surrender to the Divine Will. It is not a mere mechanical process it should be accompanied by mental effort of a very high order, God, the Beloved, becoming the focus of attention. Yet, it is a great pity that, out of ignorance, men begin to believe in the efficacy of mere repetition of some name. The Guru ridicules such notions as meaningless and extremely harmful for the spiritual growth of those who entertain these illusions. Here is his satire, in Akal Ustat, on this kind of superficial Simran :

‘ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਕਛ ਮਛ ਤਿੰਦੁਆ ਕਹਿਤ ਸਭ ਕਉਲਾ ਨਾਭਿ ਕੋਲ ਜਿਹੁ
ਤਾਲ ਮੈਂ ਰਹਤ ਹੈਂ ॥ ਗੋਪੀ ਨਾਥ ਗੁਜਰ ਗੁਪਾਲ ਸਭੇ ਧੋਨਚਾਰੀ
ਰਿਖੀਕੇਸ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਮਹੰਤ ਲਹੀਅਤ ਹੈਂ ॥ ਮਾਧਵ ਭਵਰ ਐ ਅਟੇਰੂ ਕੇ
ਕਨ੍ਹੋਯਾ ਨਾਮ ਕੰਸ ਕੇ ਬਧੋਯਾ ਯਮਦੂਤ ਕਹੀਅਤ ਹੈਂ ॥ ਮੂੜੂ ਰੂੜੂ
ਪੀਟਤ ਨ ਗੂੜੂਤਾ ਕੇ ਭੇਦ ਪਾਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਜਤ ਨ ਤਾਹਿ ਜਾਂ ਕੇ ਰਾਖੇ
ਰਹੀਅਤ ਹੈਂ ॥

'If you call God as Narayan (the word literally means one that lives in water) then the tortoise, the fish and the shark are all Narayan (because they all live in water. The Guru means to say that mere repetition of a particular word is of no avail unless the mind is actually exercised over it). If you call Him Kaula Nabh (The god Brahma is supposed to have emerged from Kaul i.e. lotus] then the whole lake containing lotus may truly be called Kaula Nabh (i.e. unless the name employed to express Him, stimulates the mind, mere repetition with the tongue has no efficacy. The same idea continues in the next lines]. If God is Gopi Nath (Krishan was the beloved of the Gopis, the wives of the Gujars) then Gujars are all Gopi Naths, and if He be called Gopal (literally, one that rears up the cows) then all cowherds are Gopals. Again, if He be called Rikhikesh (the Master of the Rishis) the same name is assumed by many priests of religious orders. If one calls Him Mahadev, that is the humble bee also, and if He is Kaniya (Krishan), the wood pecker may also be called by that name. Again, if you speak of Him as the slayer of Kans (Krishan had slain Kans) you may as well speak of the myrmidons of Death. Fools utter names aimlessly without going into their depths. They worship not Him Who protecteth all, through moral and spiritual enrichment'.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat

Here is another hymn in which not only mechanical repetitions but every misguided worship is denounced :

‘ਤਾਪ ਕੇ ਸਹੈ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਪੈ ਪਾਈਐ ਅਤਾਪ ਨਾਥ ਤਾਪਨਾ ਅਨੇਕ ਤਨ
ਘਾਇਲ ਸਹਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਜਾਪ ਕੇ ਕੀਏ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਪੈ ਪਾਯਤ ਅਜਾਪ ਦੇਵ
ਪੂਦਨਾ ਸਦੀਵ ਤੁਹੀ ਤੁਹੀ ਉਚਰਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਨਭ ਕੇ ਉਡੇ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਪੈ
ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਪਾਇਤ ਅਨਿਲ ਅਕਾਸ਼ ਪੰਛੀ ਡੋਲਬੋ ਕਰਤ ਹੈ ॥
ਆਗ ਮੇਂ ਜਰੇ ਤੇ ਗਤਿ ਗਾਡ ਕੀ ਪਰਤ ਕਰ ਪਤਾਲ ਕੇ ਬਾਸੀ
ਕਿਉਂ ਭੁਜੰਗ ਨ ਤਰਤ ਹੈ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘If the Lord, who is above all pain, could be realised by penances, the wounded man suffereth pains of many kinds. If He, who is beyond lip-worship, could be had by merely repeating His Name, the warbler ever uttereth Prio Prio (Dear, Dear). If by flying in the skies the Lord could be met, the anal bird wandereth in the firmament. If salvation could be had by burning in fire, the sati would surely attain it, and if living in the earth were fruitful, the serpent living in hell-fire would be saved’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

A Sikh once pronounced a word in Gurbani incorrectly, as a result of which an opposite interpretation could be put upon the whole line. The Guru pointed out to him the same. Then, he explained to him that the aim of reading Gurbani was not mere mechanical repetition but to enter into its spirit. One, who recited Bani incorrectly, will not have his mind in it and will derive no comfort either, from it.

It is thus clear that it is not the name or the mere word representing the Name that matters but what it signifies to the worshipper. Mechanical worship of the Name should, therefore, be considered equivalent to idol worship. If, in one case it is the worship of a mere word or name, in the other case it is the worship of a mere form. Both are based on superstition.

And, here are the Guru's views on idol worship also, which he regarded as the worship of mere form. If idol worship is forbidden so categorically, so is forbidden the worship of a mere Name.

‘ਕਾਹੂ ਲੈ ਪਾਹਨ ਪੂਜ ਧਰਯੋ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਹੂ ਲੈ ਲਿੰਗ ਗਰੇ ਲਟਕਾਯੋ ॥
ਕਾਹੂ ਲਖਯੋ ਹਰਿ ਅਵਾਚੀ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਮਹਿ ਕਾਹੂ ਪਛਾਹ ਕੋ ਸੀਸ
ਨਿਵਾਯੋ ॥ ਕੋਊ ਬੁਤਾਨ ਕੋ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ ਕੋਊ ਮ੍ਰਿਤਾਨ ਕੋ ਪੂਜਨ
ਧਾਯੋ ॥ ਕੂਰਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਉਰਝਯ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਜਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਕੋ ਭੇਦ
ਨ ਪਾਯੋ ॥

ਸੁਧਾ ਸਵੈਯੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

'Some, in reverence, place idols on their heads and some wear lingam round their necks. Some search Him in the East and others bow towards the West. Some worship idols and others tombs. The world is wholly misguided and is engaged in false ceremonies and knoweth not His Secret.'

A Swaiyya, of Guru Gobind Singh.

This kind of worship, whether it be of the form or of the name bears no fruit. But true Simran brings about a revolution in the mind of the devotee. The Name employed by him expresses his God to him and lifts him to a plane of higher consciousness. The Guru's hymns (His Word) also do the same. They describe His diverse Aspects and so have the same aim in view—to point the Way to Him. Therefore the Name and the Guru's Word become identical. The Word presents countless Attributive Names suggestive of His Nature, Character and Personality. If He is expressed as the Ethical Deity and the Embodiment of all Virtues, communion with such a Moral Being must make the devotee moral. If the devotee contemplates on God as Truth, he becomes truthful. If God is dwelt upon as Love then love flows from the devotee as naturally as it does from Him. If He is meditated upon as One in all and all in One then the devotee is no longer an individual, cut off from the rest of mankind, but is His Instrument, in the service of all humanity. Then he dies to self and lives attuned to His Eternal Will and whatever He wants him to do, he is ready for it. His personal will is replaced by the Universal Will. Ego had prevented the seeing of identity or kinship between the soul and God and therefore self-knowledge i.e. the knowledge of one's true self was shut out. By dwelling upon His Virtues, these virtues are, first, cultivated and

then possessed. We have seen in another chapter that besides the moral, intellectual, social and emotional Attributes, the Guru frequently refers to Him as Mahan-kal (The Great-Death), the Weilder of arms, the Destroyer of the armies of the wicked, The Sword, the All steel, the Conqueror and the Protector etc. From the love of this God, the martial spirit of man gets its fulfilment, though it is needed in special circumstances of life. Similarly, other Attributes are dwelt upon as suited to other walks of life. There are of course some of His Attributes such as His being self-existent or Unborn etc., which do not have much concern for man before the devoted merges in Him. But there are others which do concern him. He is Truth, Love, Bliss and Freedom and is devoid of fear or hate. It is qualities like these that have to be striven after. Dwelling on them have to enrich our own minds with these qualities. These do not enhance His Glory nor the lack of it detracts anything from that Glory. It purifies the devotee's own understanding, brings him bliss, alleviates suffering and destroys sin. Thus dwelling on His Attributive Names is an important aspect of Simran and leads to realisation. Through enrichment. The Guru emphasises this point again and again, as typified below:

‘ਬਿਅੰਤ ਨਾਮ ਧਯਾਯ ਹੋਂ ॥ ਪਰਮ ਜੋਤਿ ਪਾਯ ਹੋਂ ॥ ਨ ਧਯਾਨ
ਆਨ ਕੋ ਧਰੋਂ ॥ ਨ ਨਾਮ ਆਨ ਉਚਰੋਂ’ ॥

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦

‘I meditate on His Countless Names and attain to the Supreme Light. I meditate on none else except Him nor do I utter any name except His.’

Guru Gobind Singh, in Bachittar Natak.

Again :

‘ਅਨੰਤ ਨਾਮ ਗਾਇ ਹੋਂ ॥ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਪਾਇ ਹੋਂ’ ॥

ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘I sing His Countless Names and thus realise the Supreme Person’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Bachittar Natak.

It is clear from these lines, that the Names are not merely to be dwelt upon, they are also to be sung lovingly and, further, to produce the maximum emotional effect the singing of Names, as expressed through the Guru's hymns, are recommended to be done in accompaniment with musical instruments. Music helps to touch the deepest chords of the soul so as to awaken it to a state of higher consciousness. Without doubt, it exercises great power over the finer faculties of man. On that account, the Sikh Gurus employed it for spiritual purposes. The Word, embodying God's Praises is to be sung so as to generate emotional energy and stimulate understanding.

A Sikh once complained to the Guru that he was reciting Sukhmani (Psalm of Peace) when the musicians started singing and thus interrupted him. The Guru replied that he should have listened to the hymns being sung in music which was a thing superior to simple recitation in the same way as sacred food was superior to the coarse pulse or as rain water was superior to the well water. The water of the well could irrigate a few fields only while the rain water would serve countless fields.

From the above, one can see that Simran is an exercise that has the power to purify the soul and raise it to a height that leads to self-discovery. It makes communion with the Divine a normal, an effortless and a permanent affair through constantly carrying into depths of spirituality, so that the ups and downs of life do not break the union. Simran is a sort of an act that takes a man above the mere intellectual plane. The Guru makes this distinction in Bachittar Natak, thus :

‘ਕਾਗਦ ਦੀਪ ਸਭੈ ਕਰਕੈ ਅਰੁ ਸਾਤ ਸਮੁੰਦ੍ਰਨ ਕੀ ਮਸਿ ਕੈ ਹੋ ॥
 ਕਾਟ ਬਨਾਸਪਤੀ ਸਗਰੀ ਲਿਖਬੇ ਹੂੰ ਕੇ ਲੇਖਨਿ ਕਾਜ ਬਨੈ ਹੋ ॥
 ਸਾਰਸੁਤੀ ਬਕਤਾ ਕਰਕੈ ਜੁਗ ਕੋਟਿ ਗਨੇਸ਼ ਕੇ ਹਾਥ ਲਿਖੈ ਹੋ ॥
 ਕਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਬਿਨਾ ਬਿਨਤੀ ਨ ਤਉ ਤੁਮਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਨੈਕ ਰਿਝੈ ਹੋ’ ॥

‘If all the regions of the world were converted into paper and the seven seas into ink, if the whole vegetation were cut and made into pens to write with, if the art of expression were acquired from the goddess of learning and the speed of writing from millions of Ganeshas, still it would not be possible to please Thee, O Sword, O Death of all, without offering Thee prayers’. The lines point out that any effort to measure Him merely in an intellectual manner cannot produce the state of mind leading to Realisation. It is really prayer when one opens oneself entirely to the Lord as one actually is that can do it and it is the prayer that is an aspect of Simran.

Thus, Simran is a practice in which the soul is in exercise for its spiritual health. It awakens the higher self and transports it to the state of equipoise, unconditioned by the three qualities of Peace, Desire and Passion. Then, one becomes God-conscious, dwells on Him every moment of one’s life and becomes happy. Simran changes the entire outlook so that the whole life becomes a sort of Simran since this life remains God-pointed in the most natural manner. An equable and a balanced state called ‘Sehaj’ is reached which keeps life undisturbed amidst its ups and downs. This is the state where the spirit of man gets its fulfilment.

But for this fulfilment, many religions of the world had wrongly believed that it was necessary to turn away from society. It seemed to them perfectly reasonable to assume that contemplative life was not possible in the turmoil of the world, where hope, desire and fear

ever remained man's lot since these entered the human body through contact with the affairs of the world. No real happiness was conceivable, it was thought, unless all wordly activities were abandoned. For such a view of life, the world must appear as an evil and a place of pain and suffering and release was possible only through complete dissociation from it. As a corollary to the above it was further supposed that the body too was impure because passions and desires sprang out of it and caused pain and suffering. It was therefore to be subjected to ascetic exercises and rigorous penances like fasting and exposure to severe heat and cold so that its desires were killed and the soul's emancipation assured. It was argued that as fire could come only from dry wood, enlightenment would come when all passions were stilled, through self-torture. In pursuance of this negative philosophy many misguided men renounced the world, fled to the mountain retreats and indulged in austere practices of an unnatural kind. Even Buddha had walked out at midnight without a word to his newly married wife while she was sleeping with her little baby. He practised asceticism and self-mortification for many years till he was reduced to a skeleton, without any spirit or zeal left in him.

India had for centuries held in high esteem the philosophy of asceticism and renunciation. Standing on one leg, wandering purposelessly the world over, living on roots, staying at tombs and cremation grounds, assuming difficult postures for contemplation and doing penances of various kinds, were the natural concomitants of that philosophy. Married life was considered as a particularly despicable thing. Sex satisfaction was an evil and a tragic folly. A life of celibacy was the easier way to reach God. Woman

was a tempter and hence an evil, intrinsically unfit for salvation. It was for distrust of her that she was locked behind a Purdah. The birth of a daughter was considered a calamity, and this had led to infanticide. Thus, the whole approach to life was basically ill-conceived

Some religions had gone further. For them creation itself was an illusion. It actually did not exist and was only a deception practised on the sense organs. When the body died, the world died with it. So nothing was of value and all ethical or spiritual values that man cherished were illusions.

As against these views, the Sikh Gurus did not accept the thesis that life was sinful in its origin or that the world was an evil. On the contrary, they believed that it had emerged from the Pure Source and was therefore pure, in essence. Nor was the body an evil and a liability. It was rather the Sacred Temple because God resided in it and therefore search for God would necessitate the care of the body. It should be fed well so that it could live, function properly and serve its master, the soul, in the realisation of its goal. Not that it was to be pampered through over-indulgence in sensual pleasures. That was the other extreme and very harmful. What is meant is that it was not to be crushed through tortures and penances because it was the only instrument the soul had to help realise its own true self. Also this Sacred Temple of God should remain pure in word, thought and deed because impure thoughts, unclean deeds and vile utterances were a sacrilege to that Temple. The priest at the Temple i.e. the soul, could live truly on truth, love and service. If these things were denied to it, it died. If these were ever in jeopardy, the body had then no purpose to live and must be sacrificed to keep the flame of self burning

brightly. We give here some of the Guru's hymns ridiculing in scathing terms penances, empty meditations and other unnatural and superficial practices that were in vogue in his time. The language is strong but without a sting, being couched in pleasant humour. Here is one of them :

‘ਖੂਕ ਮਲਹਾਰੀ ਗਜ ਗਦਹਾ ਬਿਭੂਤ ਧਾਰੀ ਗਿਦੂਆ ਮਸਾਨ ਬਾਸ
ਕਰਯੋਈ ਕਰਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਘੁਘੂ ਮਟ ਬਾਸੀ ਲਗੇ ਡੋਲਤ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਮ੍ਰਿਗ
ਤਰਵਰ ਸਦੀਵ ਮੋਨ ਸਾਧੋਈ ਮਰਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਬਿੰਦ ਕੇ ਸਧੋਯਾ ਤਾਂਹਿ ਹੀਜ
ਕੀ ਬਡੈਯਾ ਦੇਤ ਬੰਦਰਾ ਸਦੀਵ ਪਾਇ ਨਾਗੇ ਹੀ ਫਿਰਤ ਹੈ ॥
ਅੰਗਨਾ ਅਧੀਨ ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਮੈਂ ਪਰਬੀਨ ਏਕ ਗਯਾਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਛੀਨ
ਕੈਸੇ ਕੈ ਤਰਤ ਹੈ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Swine eat filth, elephants and donkeys bespoil themselves with ashes. Jackals live at places of cremation, owls reside in tombs, deers roam about alone in the forests, trees ever perish in silence. One who restrains his seed may have the credit that goes to a hermaphrodite. Monkeys ever wander barefooted. How shall one, subject to the influence of women and engrossed in lust and wrath, be saved without Divine Knowledge’.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

Again :

‘ਸੀਸ ਪਟਕਤ ਜਾਂ ਕੈ ਕਾਨ ਮੈਂ ਖਜੂਰਾ ਧਸੈ ਮੂੰਡ ਛਟਕਤ ਮਿਤ੍ਰ
ਪ੍ਰਤ੍ਰ ਹੂੰ ਕੇ ਸੋਕ ਸੋ ॥ ਆਕ ਕੋ ਚਰੋਯਾ ਫਲ ਫੂਲ ਕੋ ਭਛੈਯਾ ਸਦਾ
ਬਨ ਕੇ ਭਰਮੈਯਾ ਔਰ ਦੂਸਰੋ ਨ ਬੋਕ ਸੋ ॥ ਕਹਾਂ ਭਯੋ ਭੇਡ ਜੋ
ਘਸਤ ਸੀਸ ਬ੍ਰਿਛਨ ਸੋ ਮਾਟੀ ਕੋ ਭਛੈਯਾ ਬੋਲ ਪੂਛ ਲੀਜੈ ਜੋਕ ਸੋ ॥
ਕਾਮਨਾ ਅਧੀਨ ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ ਏਕ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਬਿਹੀਨ ਕੈਸੇ
ਭੇਟੈ ਪਰਲੋਕ ਸੋ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘He in whose ear an ear-ring hath entered, shaketh his head, and he who hath lost a friend or a son beateth his head to mourn the loss. For grazing on the akk plant or for eating fruits and flowers or for ever

wandering in forests, there is no animal like a goat. What if a sheep were to rub its head against trees (and in this way take off its hair)? And those who eat earth, may well ask the leech as to what its benefits are. How can he who is a slave to worldly desires and is addicted to lust and wrath and is without any faith, enshrined in his heart, find God'?

Guru Gobind Singh, in Akal Ustat.

Again :

‘ਭੂਤ ਬਨਚਾਰੀ ਛਿਤ ਛੋਨਾ ਸਭੇ ਦੁਧਾ ਧਾਰੀ ਪੈਨ ਕੇ ਅਹਾਰੀ
ਸੁ ਭੁਜੰਗ ਜਾਨੀਅਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਭਛੇਯਾ ਧਨ ਲੋਭ ਕੇ ਤਜੇਯਾ ਤੇ
ਤੇ ਗਉਅਨ ਕੇ ਜੇਯਾ ਬਿਖਭੇਯਾ ਮਾਨੀਅਤ ਹੈ ॥ ਨਭ ਕੇ ਉਡੇਯਾ
ਤਾਹਿ ਪੰਛੀ ਕੀ ਬਡੇਯਾ ਦੇਤ ਬਗਲਾ ਬਿੜਾਲ ਬਿਕ ਧਯਾਨ ਠਾਨੀਅਤ
ਹੈ ॥ ਜੇ ਤੋ ਬਡੇ ਗਯਾਨੀ ਤਿਨੋ ਜਾਨੀ ਪੈ ਬਖਾਨੀ ਨਾਹਿ ਐਸੇ ਨ ਪ੍ਰਪੰਚ
ਮਨ ਭੂਲ ਆਨੀਅਤ ਹੈ’ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘Spirits live in forests, children live on milk and snakes live on air. Those who eat grass and give up wealth attractions may be likened to calves and oxen. Those who fly in heavens (like Yogis) can be given the credit of acquiring the attributes of birds. They who are ever engaged in meditations may resemble cranes, cats and wolves. Men of true Wisdom have known and yet they assert not. They do not allow such illusions (as stated above) to enter their hearts even by mistake’.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat.

The Guru means to say that self-suppression and penances of the above kind are too weak to avail a man on the path of realisation. Also the All loving God can not be expected to recommend penances as a means for self-fulfilment. Further, the mind carries with itself its feelings, thoughts, and desires whether one lives in forests, cut off from society, or lives the life of a householder. To attain purity of the soul, struggle

with the mind has to be carried on wherever one may be. Reducing one's possessions does not necessarily reduce possessiveness, whether one lives in a hut or in a palace. Methods of escape can serve only as tricks to deceive the soul that all is well with it. Renunciation taken to such extremes creates an unhealthy outlook on life. The real fact of life is that it is only in the world of action that a man's character is put to the test. Many people who renounce home under some momentary impulse, discover later, to their own cost, that they have carried the evil with them. If, then, evil remains hidden in the mind everywhere, there is surely a greater likelihood of its being discovered in the family life where contact with others provides opportunities for discovering and remedying weaknesses.

For such a view of life, marriage must acquire a new significance. We have an interesting Sakhi in the Guru's life bearing on the subject of marriage. Here it is :

A Sikh would not agree to marry. Like so many other misguided youngmen, he thought that marriage was a hindrance to progress and sex was an evil. His parents came to the Guru to complain about the boy, who, they said, was otherwise quite good and obedient. The youngman was asked to explain. He replied that the Guru had, in a way, himself forbidden marriage. In this connection, he quoted the following lines of Guru Ram Dass :

'ਏਹੁ ਕੁਟੰਬੁ ਤੂੰ ਜਿ ਦੇਖਦਾ ਚਲੈ ਨਹੀ' ਤੇਰੈ ਨਾਲੇ ॥ ਸਾਥਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਚਲੈ
ਨਾਹੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਨਾਲਿ ਕਿਉਂ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਈਐ' ॥

'The family thou see-est goeth not with thee. Then, why dost thou love such things of the world as keep no company'.

The Guru was pleased with the earnestness of the boy even though he knew that the boy's Interpretations of the lines were wholly misconceived. The Guru explained to him the difference between the hermit life and the family life, in terms similar to those examined above. The youngman realised that it was wrong to believe that married life was an obstacle in the way of a religious life. He was converted.

Sex instinct, being a natural phenomenon, was not to be annihilated. Denial of natural human urges was bound

to prove injurious for physical, mental and moral growth. These urges would find expression in other unhealthy ways. For want of a proper outlet, mere denial of physical indulgence could lead to disgraceful situations. Misguided zeal for sex suppression often developed inflamed imagination, producing many unhealthy complexes. There was nothing unholy in a sex life, if properly disciplined, controlled, regulated and sublimated. Partnership could be an immense help rather than a hindrance in the life's journey. Family life was automatically a school where lessons on love, sacrifice and self-denial were learnt. The householder was frequently called upon to subordinate selfishness, as the love of the family demanded it. Here we give another Sakhi :

Once, the Guru was on his way to Agra to meet the emperor Bahadur Shah. He asked Sikh a close by to bring some water for him. The Sikh went from place to place in search of some house of a barren woman as he mistakenly believed that no water could be pure and fit for the Guru in a house having children, who always defiled everything. The Guru severely rebuked him for holding such unholy views. He said, the householder's place was purer than that of the hermit, who thoughtlessly deprived himself of all the blessings of domestic life, without being compensated for in purity of life, through his so-called renunciation. External abstinence did not necessarily result in inner purity. Asceticism practised on the physical plane did not change the content of the mind which remained above and beyond the physical plane. The practice of renunciation of selfish motives was true renunciation. The five passions were to be controlled and not suppressed. Here is a hymn of the Guru to emphasise this point of view :

‘ਰੇ ਮਨ ਐਸੋ ਕਰਿ ਸੰਨਿਆਸਾ ॥ ਬਨ ਸੇ ਸਦਨ ਸਭੈ ਕਰ ਸਮਝਹੁ
ਮਨ ਹੀ ਮਾਹਿ ਉਦਾਸਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਜਤ ਕੀ ਜਟਾ ਜੋਗ ਕੇ ਮਜਨ
ਨੇਮ ਕੇ ਨਖਨ ਬਢਾਓ ॥ ਗਯਾਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਤਮ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ਹੁ ਨਾਮ
ਬਿਭੂਤ ਲਗਾਉ ॥ ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ ਸੁਲਪ ਸੀ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਦਯਾ ਛਿਮਾ
ਤਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ॥ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਬਾਹਿਬੋ ਹੁੰਬੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਗਣ ਅਤੀਤ ॥
ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਲੋਭ ਹਠ ਮੋਹ ਨ ਮਨ ਸੋ ਲਯਾਵੈ ॥ ਤਬ ਹੀ
ਆਤਮ ਤਤ ਕੋ ਦਰਸੈ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਕਹਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਜਾਰੇ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ॥

‘O my mind, practise renunciation in this way : consider

thy whole house as the forest and be thou an anchorite at heart. Make continence thy matted hair. union with the Supreme thy ablutions and a disciplined life the growing of thy nails. Let Divine Knowledge by thy Guru to enlighten thy soul and let God's Name be the ashes applied to thy body. Eat and sleep moderately and cherish love, compassion and forgiveness in thy life. Ever retain cool temperament and patience, then thou shalt rise above the three qualities. Let not lust, wrath, covetousness, obstinacy and attachment enter thy heart. Thou shalt then behold the Supreme Essence of the world and meet the Lord'.

Guru Gobind Singh, in Shabad Hazare.

In these lines we have the image of a true Karma Yogi who follows the 'Middle Way' between ascetic self-denial and sensuous indulgence. A true ascetic is one who has realised unity of all existence and remains detached. A man of God remains in the world for the service of mankind, which he does in a spirit of detachment. The Guru had said in Krishan-avtar: 'How can I perform austerities? How can I attend to Thee, O Lord, if I forsake domestic duties'?

This means clearly that the Lord can be served, through His people only. The world is therefore not to be forsaken but transformed, so that service of humanity becomes the life's mainstay.

It is clear from the extensive elaborations given in this chapter that the Guru's philosophy was really the reproduction of the teachings of his predecessors. It was truly Guru Nanak who had appeared, in his tenth incarnation, as Guru Gobind Singh, though in a different role too. Every time the succession to Guruship had taken place, it was really the spiritual succession preceded by spiritual transformation. The spirit or the soul or the Word of Guru Nanak had become incarnated in Lehna and then in Guru Amar Dass and finally in Guru Gobind Singh. All Gurus were truly one in spirit.

‘ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ’ ॥

‘His Light and the mode of his life were basically the same as those of his Master, Guru Nanak. The Master had only been re-incarnated in him’.

Lehna may have lived in error and isolation in his earlier life. But when he was perfected through a life of devotion, love, and discipline, he was attuned to the

divine will of his Master. Guru Nanak, and was sanctified as Guru. He became as perfect as his Master, through this spiritual transformation. The unity in the plurality of the Gurus, due to the spiritual transformation effected in each of the Gurus, is emphasised by Guru Gobind Singh himself in Bachittar Natak, thus :

‘ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਗਦ ਕੋ ਬਪ ਧਰਾ ॥ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਇਹ ਜਗ ਮੇਂ ਕਰਾ ॥
ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਪੁਨ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾਯੋ ॥ ਜਨ ਦੀਪਕ ਤੇ ਦੀਪ ਜਗਾਯੋ ॥
ਅਮਰ ਦਾਸ ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸ ਕਹਾਯੋ ॥ ਸਾਧਨ ਲਖਾ ਮੂੜ ਨਹ ਪਾਯੋ ॥
ਭਿੰਨ ਭਿੰਨ ਸਭ ਹੂੰ ਕਰ ਜਾਨਾ ॥ ਏਕ ਰੂਪ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਪਹਚਾਨਾ ॥
ਜਿਨ ਜਾਤਾ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਸਿਧ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਬਿਨ ਸਮਝੈ ਸਿਧ ਹਥ ਨ ਆਈ ॥
ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉਂ ਮਿਲ ਗਏ ॥ ਗੁਰਤਾ ਦੇਹ ਅਰਜਨਹ ਭਏ ॥ ਜਬ
ਅਰਜਨ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਿਧਾਏ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਤਿਹ ਠਾਂ ਠਹਰਾਏ ॥ ਹਰਿ
ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਿਧਾਰੇ ॥ ਹਰੀ ਚਾਏ ਤਿਹ ਠਾਂਹ ਬੈਠਾਰੇ ॥ ਹਰੀ
ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਸੁਤ ਵਏ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਤੇ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਭਏ ॥

Nanak assumed the body of Angad and made true religion to prevail in the world. Afterwards the same Nanak was called Amar Dass and this transformation happened in the same way as one lamp is lit from another. Amar Dass became Ram Dass. Holy men could recognise the fact of transformation but the fools could not. Most people took them as distinct but a rare person also recognised that they were all one. Those who did recognise, acquired wisdom and those who did not, gained nothing. When Ram Dass was blended with God, he gave the Guruship to Arjan. And when Arjan left for God's abode, he seated Hargobind in his place and when Hargobind departed for God's World, he seated Har Rai. After him, his son, Harkrishan, became the Guru and then Tegh Bahadur succeeded him'.

Thus, it was not any of the Gurus that had changed but the circumstances which necessitated the change of role. The all-loving non violent, Guru Tegh Bahadur, had transformed himself into Guru Gobind Singh in the same way as Guru Arjan, the embodiment of love, humility and sacrifice, had transformed himself into Guru Hargobind, a fact, stressed by Bhai Gurdas, thus :

‘ਗੁਰ ਅਰਜਨ ਕਾਇਆ ਪਲਟ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਵਾਰੀ’ ॥
‘It was Guru Arjan who had shaped himself into Guru Hargobind’.

